

THE Atlantic

APRIL 2007

HOT PROSPECTS

WHO LOSES—AND WHO WINS— IN A WARMING WORLD

by **GREGG EASTERBROOK**

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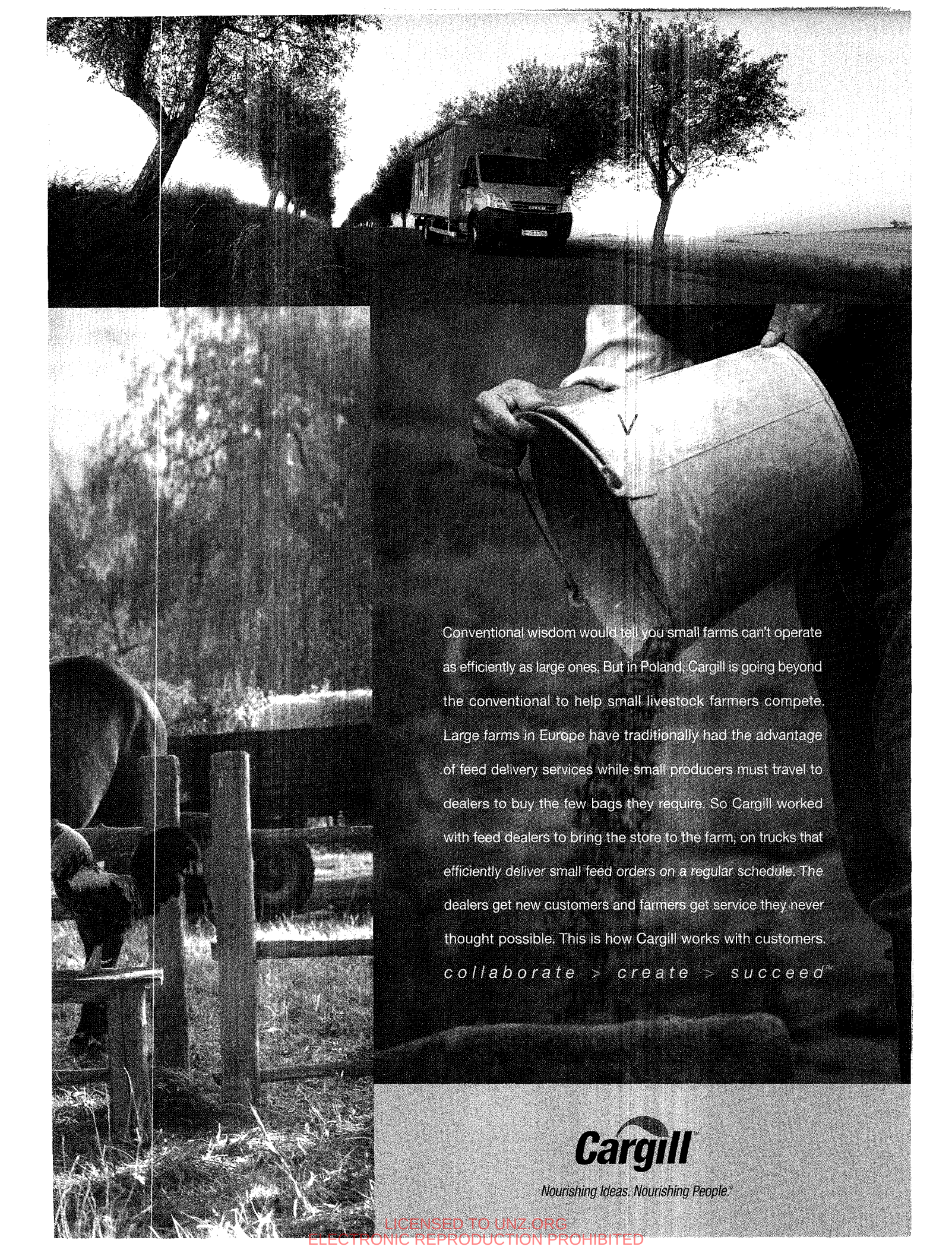
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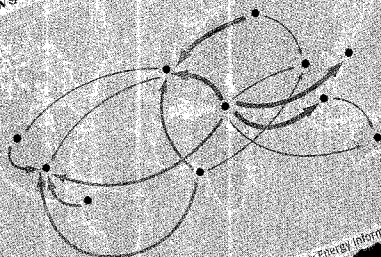
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**There are 193 countries in the world.
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So who's holding whom over a barrel?

Global Oil Flows



Source: Energy Information Administration

The fact is, the vast majority of countries rely on the few energy-producing nations that won the geological lottery, blessing them with abundant hydrocarbons. And yet, even regions with plenty of raw resources import some form of energy. Saudi Arabia, for example, the world's largest oil exporter, imports refined petroleum products like gasoline.

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Projected Global Oil Demand

2004 DEMAND
82 mbpd*

2030 DEMAND
115 mbpd



*Source: International Energy Agency
Assumes current policies

OBJECTIVES EFFICIENCIES

ENERGY IMPORTS BY OIL EXPORTING COUNTRIES

	GASOLINE	ELECTRICITY	NATURAL GAS	COAL
Saudi Arabia				
Russia				
Norway				
UAE				
Nigeria				

Source: Energy Information Administration

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- DIVERSIFY ENERGY SUPPLIES
- FIND MORE TRADITIONAL FUELS
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- FOSTER OPEN MARKETS & TRANSPARENCY
- ENCOURAGE CONSERVATION/ENERGY EFFICIENCY

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- ☐ Try to hit a major-league fastball
- ☐ Stay at a five-star hotel and upgrade your room
- ☐ See the Northern Lights
- ☐ Take a train ride on the Orient Express
- ☐ Go to the Galapagos Islands
- ☐ Ride a motorcycle across the U.S.
- ☐ Help dig for dinosaur bones
- ☐ Float along the Nile
- ☐ Own a set of Frette linens
- ☐ Volunteer to help save the environment
- ☐ Climb Mount Olympus
- ☐ Watch the Sumo Wrestling Championship in Japan
- ☐ Ride a mule through the Grand Canyon
- ☐ Train like an astronaut at space camp
- ☐ Fly across the Atlantic in a private jet
- ☐ Have Gospel Brunch at the House of Blues
- ☐ Drink a mint julep at the Kentucky Derby

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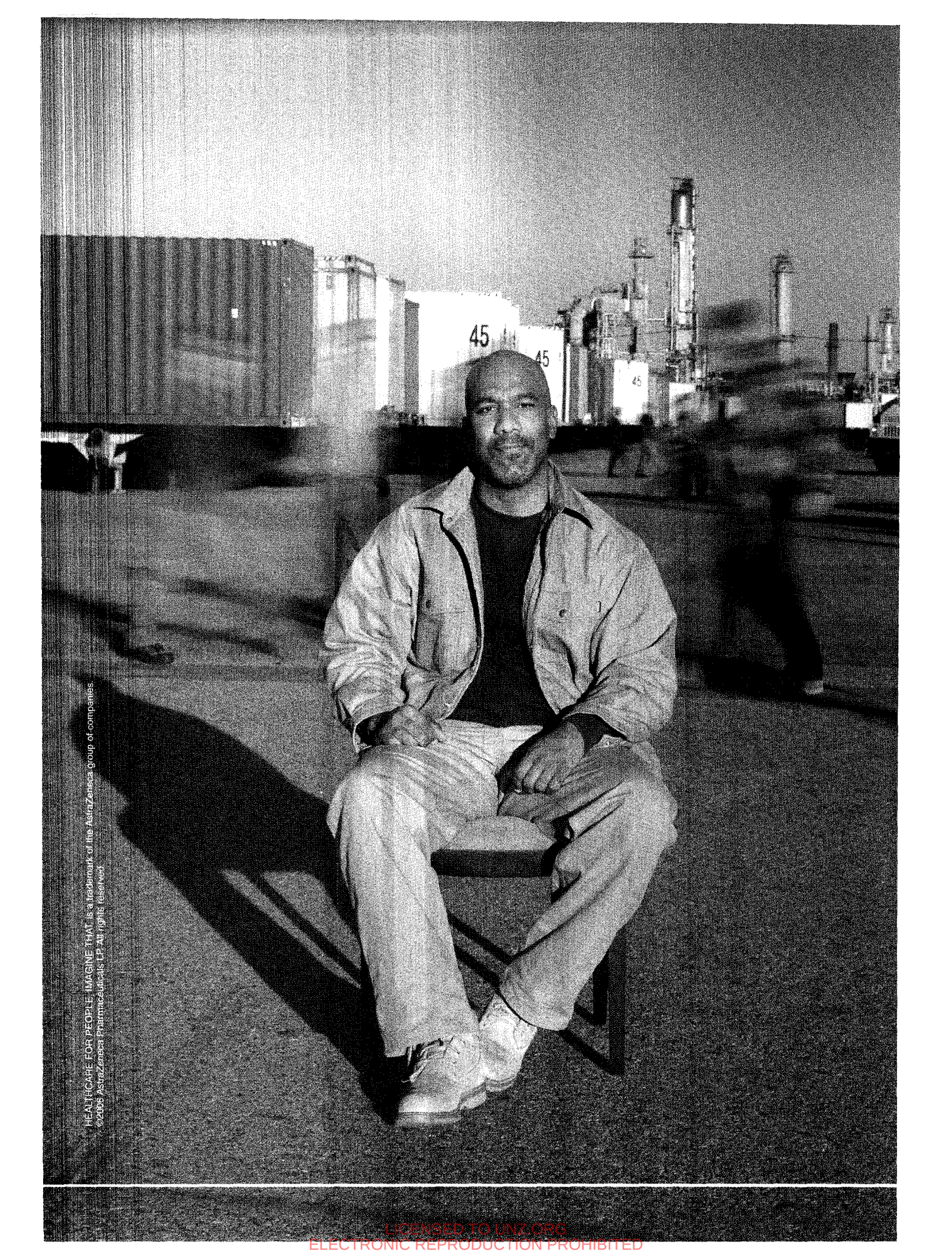
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THE **Atlantic**

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Two girls walk through a sandstorm outside a refugee camp in Bahai, Chad, near the Sudan-Chad border. Stephan Faris examines the link between global warming and the Darfur crisis in "The Real Roots of Darfur."

PHOTOGRAPH BY
LYNSEY ADDARIO/CORBIS

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MULTIMEDIA: STOP SNITCHING

See video clips from police and anti-"snitching" DVDs, a Web-only feature about crime in East Baltimore, and an interview with Jeremy Kahn, author of "The Story of a Snitch."

INTERVIEW: AS THE WORLD WARMS

Gregg Easterbrook talks about his cover story, "Global Warming: Who Loses—and Who Wins?," and the unexpected by-products of climate change.

INTERVIEW: COEDS THROUGH THE YEARS

Lynn Peril discusses the evolution of young women's college experiences as documented in her new book, *College Girls*, reviewed in this issue.

"If I had not been in the car I was in,
I probably wouldn't be alive today."

**A MAJOR COLLISION WITH A TRACTOR-TRAILER GAVE PAULA VARSALONA
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And while the circumstances of Paula's story are personal, her sentiment is shared by many: "I love all the luxury and the performance. I love the style of my S-Class. But for me, safety is number one. That is why my husband and I only drive Mercedes."



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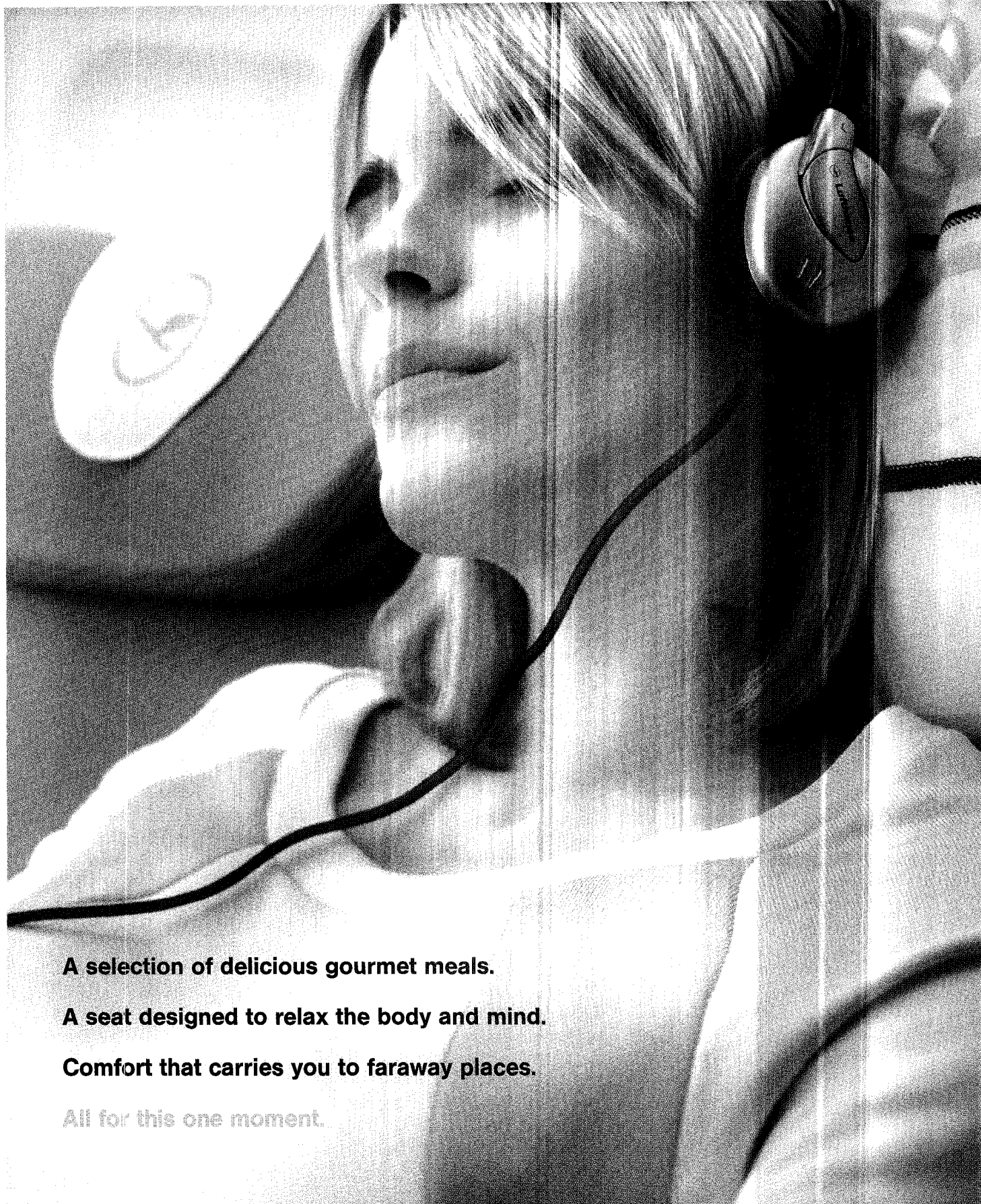
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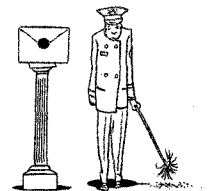
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



APRIL 2007 THE ATLANTIC

ALL THE PRESIDENTS' LIES

I appreciate the kind words Carl M. Cannon had to say ("Untruth and Consequences," January/February *Atlantic*) about my intellectual honesty and the arguments in my book, *When Presidents Lie: A History of Official Deception and Its Consequences*, but I'm afraid we differ on what it was I was trying to say. Cannon writes that I argue, "Although wartime may be when presidents can get away with lying—and is perhaps even when they most feel the need to lie—recent American history suggests that it is also when the costs of a lie may be too high."

In fact, I don't have a problem with most genuine wartime lies. I accept the fact that troop movements and the like must be protected even at the cost of explicit and purposeful presidential dishonesty. What I object to is the manipulation of the *threat* of war—or a state of affairs depicted to be one of perpetual war—to defend lies that are, in fact, unrelated. In the case of Yalta, for instance, I do not object to the secrecy—and the lies necessary to protect the secrecy—of the Far Eastern agreement, when the Allies were readying an invasion of Japan and did not want to alert the enemy to the possibility of Soviet participation.

What I argue is that Franklin D. Roosevelt did himself, his party, and his country no favors in presenting his agreement with our wartime ally in Eastern Europe as something that it clearly wasn't. The war, in that case, was an excuse for FDR to avoid telling the country that he was actually forced to make concessions to Soviet interests in Poland and elsewhere that were inconsistent with his rhetoric.

Similarly, John F. Kennedy lied about the solution to the Cuban missile crisis after the threat of war had already passed. Lyndon Johnson and Ronald

Reagan, like George W. Bush, lied to the nation in order to try to get us into war. Bush convinced the nation that an imminent threat to our security existed when, in reality, it did not; there was only the president's ambition to act without the inconvenience of a properly informed public discourse about his intentions. In each case, reality demanded its tribute.

Eric Alterman

New York, N.Y.

In Carl Cannon's otherwise terrific "Untruth and Consequences," the author misstates the record after Franklin Roosevelt made his famous 1932 campaign pledge in Pittsburgh to balance the budget and cut spending by 25 percent. As I explain in *The Defining Moment: FDR's Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope*, Roosevelt actually fulfilled this promise at first, balancing the budget and cutting spending by 31 percent. But he quickly pioneered "off-budget" emergency spending and ran up the deficit, which is why his speechwriter jokingly advised him in 1936, "Deny you were ever in Pittsburgh."

Jonathan Alter

Montclair, N.J.

Carl Cannon lists three popular theories to explain George W. Bush's behavior. A fourth theory, one that explains far more of Bush's conduct, comes from a quote attributed to Jeb Bush in Ron Suskind's *The One-Percent Doctrine*. Jeb is quoted as saying that his brother George seems to genuinely enjoy forcing other people to knuckle under. In other words, he's a bully. He doesn't really care whether he's right or wrong; in fact, he might find it more fun to be wrong and still force everyone to kowtow.

This theory would explain such strange presidential behavior as resubmitting court nominations that he knows the Democrats won't support;

breaking the law on domestic surveillance when he could have easily gotten approval from the FISA Court; and insisting on a troop escalation right after the American voters, his generals, and many Republicans told him that the war had become unwinnable. This theory also explains the president's refusal to read opinion columns and editorials—because that would mean letting someone else tell him how to think.

Ed Gogek

Prescott, Ariz.

Carl Cannon rightly emphasizes that "a majority of Americans believed Bush 'deliberately misled the American public' about whether Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction." Unmentioned was a more serious and far-reaching deception: Bush's successful attempt to convince Americans that the regime of Saddam Hussein bore responsibility for the attacks of September 11, 2001. Bush may have never stated directly that Iraq was the main instigator of 9/11, but he repeatedly juxtaposed comments about 9/11 and Iraq in such a way that millions of Americans came to believe that Iraq was the main force behind the 9/11 tragedy. More than 40 percent of Americans believed at one point that Saddam Hussein was "personally involved" in the September 11 massacre, and a Zogby poll last year found that 85 percent of GIs surveyed in Iraq believed the U.S. mission is mainly "to retaliate for Saddam's role" in 9/11.

Gilbert Herod

Indianapolis, Ind.

Carl M. Cannon replies:

I have no quibble with Jonathan Alter on his point about Franklin Roosevelt. It's possible, however, that Eric Alterman misunderstood me, or perhaps underestimates the full implication of his own insightful argument. I didn't intend to characterize



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his contention as being that a president who misinforms the enemy about "troop movements" is the same as one who misleads his own people about the rationale for entering a war. But it does seem that an examination of wartime presidents—and if the Cold War is included, then we are talking about every president from FDR to George W. Bush—demonstrates the inherent tension between the truth-telling required of the elected leader of a democratic society and the secrecy required of a commander in chief.

Ed Gogek engages in psychoanalysis of the current president, diagnosing him as a "bully," but I'm too old-school for that type of dissection and prefer to stick to facts. Gilbert Herod asserts in his otherwise complimentary missive that I should have taken the current president to task for public-opinion polls showing how many Americans conflate the Iraq War and the events of September 11, 2001. Perhaps he's right: Bush doesn't directly blame Saddam Hussein for the

9/11 attacks, but his rhetoric is slyly aimed at attracting the support of those who do. On the other hand, Bush's critics in the Democratic Party have played the same game—selectively quoting the president to make him seem cynical or dishonest in this area. Most of this strikes me as the normal give-and-take of political discourse. In the end, Americans are responsible for their own opinions. I wouldn't, for instance, blame LBJ or Richard Nixon for the disquieting fact that millions of Americans believe the U.S. moon landing was faked—even though the disillusionment that set in during the 1970s was partly a product of Vietnam and Watergate.

BEYOND PARTISANSHIP?

I was disappointed in Joshua Green's lack of skepticism concerning Unity08 ("Surprise Party," January/February *Atlantic*). For one thing, many issues are so complex and difficult that a simple "video answer" from a candidate is

not sufficient—particularly Iraq, a situation for which the Unity08 members, according to their own Web site, have no plan and no solution. Soldiers are dying for an unnecessary war built on deceptions, yet what is Unity08's top priority? Lobbying reform.

Moreover, there are already at least two third parties—the Greens and the Libertarians—that have committed, over the past several decades, to building genuine alternatives. Regardless of what one thinks of these parties, they have taken clear stances and have clear philosophies. By contrast, Unity08 members have nothing in common; we don't know where they stand on most issues, because there is no platform. Apparently one will magically appear in 2008, after the candidate is chosen. If a candidate is chosen. Maybe.

It's a clever choice on the part of the Unity08 founders: Take no stance on difficult issues, and more people will sign up. It's likely, though, that as soon as



Unity08 selects a candidate, at least a third (if not more) of the “party’s” support will disappear overnight, because of the candidate’s stance on issues like gay-and-lesbian rights, abortion, Iraq, the minimum wage, environmental law, and so on. Some might say this proves the Unity founders’ point about excess partisanship. I say, rather, that it’s the attempt of a group of has-beens to make themselves relevant again by deceiving people.

*Greg Machlin
Iowa City, Iowa*

SCHOOL CHOICE

A charter-school proponent contends that the changes in New Orleans’s schools (“Reading, Writing, Resurrection,” January/February *Atlantic*) are “the biggest experiment in a system of schools of choice we’ve ever seen,” and for the United States, that may be true. But in the early 1990s, New Zealand, under a program called Tomorrow’s Schools, abolished attendance zones and allowed

parents to apply to any school, anywhere in the country. Once students were admitted, tuition, in the form of quasi-vouchers, followed them to their schools of choice, including parochial schools.

Initial enthusiasm turned to disillusionment, however, when the best schools quickly filled up and began turning away hard-to-teach students. Those rejected—disproportionately poor and minority—were forced by default to return to their schools of origin, which became significantly more polarized along ethnic and socioeconomic lines.

*Walt Gardner
Los Angeles, Calif.*

THE GLAMOUR OF FLIGHT

Virginia Postrel makes some interesting observations about passenger flight, past and present (“Up, Up, and Away,” January/February *Atlantic*), but she misses some of the qualities that made flying “glamorous” in the golden age.

Danger, both the sense and the reality of it, was part of the glamour. This was still a time when even the best planes sometimes fell out of the sky. The largest airliners in those days were tiny, compared with modern jets. The reciprocating engines that powered these birds were as reliable as anyone could make them, but every now and then one of the thousands of banging, slapping, jiggling parts broke down.

Those airliners did not fly very high, either. The maximum ceiling of the DC-6 was 25,000 feet, and the plane usually cruised at a much lower altitude. One of my most vivid memories is of flying—en route from Lima, Peru, to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil—not over but alongside the towering peaks of the Andes. You did not fly above the weather; you flew through it—and sometimes the weather won.

Even the act of taking off in those days added to the sense of adventure, mystery, and danger. The cabin door closed, and the engines coughed and

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choked themselves to life. The pilot cranked up the rpm, the engines roared defiance at the sky, and the craft itself quivered and strained against the brakes. Finally the pilot released the brakes, the plane lumbered down the strip, and then it groaned its way into the air.

Now that, my friend, was glamour.
Paul W. Moomaw
Missoula, Mont.

ARGUING iTUNES

Michael Hirschorn does us a great service by unearthing a handful of interesting, cutting-edge digital-music sites ("The Digital-Music Mosh Pit," January/February *Atlantic*). One gets the sense, however, that Hirschorn puts his zeal for what's new and what's next ahead of considerations that are more fundamental to music lovers and explorers.

First, Hirschorn seems more enamored with new ways to discover music than with what the product delivered by these new services actually sounds like. To put it bluntly, most of the songs that stream through Pandora and Last.fm suck. I'm sure that has something to do with the iffy provenance of each audio file, and the fact that the bytes are piped through a thicket of intermediary networks, routers, and systems and get squirted out through cheap sound cards cabled to poor-quality speakers. I'm equally sure that, over time, the delivery technology will improve. But, given the inherently poor audio quality of the MP3 format, I wonder how much we can ever really expect.

Second, Hirschorn is unduly hard on iTunes. I guess you could call iTunes a "closed system," as he does. Except that you can download any track off any RedBook-conforming CD into your iTunes library by clicking a couple of buttons. Except that you can share any protected AAC track you buy from the iTunes Store with anybody, regardless of platform, by burning it to a CD. Except that iTunes gives you an elegant, peerlessly simple way to find, sign up for, and manage podcasts (a

communally based technology that is growing faster than a thousand Last.fm's). When you actually look at all the ways that iTunes syncs, links, and accommodates old technologies, competing formats, and different platforms, I think it's quite inaccurate—and a little unfair—to call it "closed."

Joel MaHarry
Santa Monica, Calif.

Michael Hirschorn replies:

Joel MaHarry makes some good points in his letter, particularly about sound quality. MP3 quality certainly isn't up to snuff by traditional standards, but one of the implicit trade-offs of the digital era is swapping quality for choice and customization. People seem willing to watch low-quality video on the Web, for example, if they can watch what they want when they want it. Also, for most forms of hip-hop or rock, the difference in quality between a digital track and an album or CD is nugatory. For classical or jazz, I've been using the Olive music server, which allows you to digitize your CDs using high-quality "lossless" formats like FLAC.

I do not dispute MaHarry's argument about the intuitive beauty of the iPod/iTunes system. It is, indeed, a swan among ugly ducklings. But it is also an enemy of choice and discovery, and it places undue burdens on users who want to freely use music they've purchased through iTunes. Forcing users to burn music they download from iTunes onto a CD before they can share it with others or load it onto another music platform is hardly a graceful solution. Indeed, critics have argued that Apple put such hurdles in place in order to build a monopoly position in digital music.

However, it's worth noting that since my column went to press, the labels have dropped a number of hints that they will be releasing more music in the unrestricted MP3 format. And in February, Steve Jobs himself issued a remarkable open letter acknowledging the shortfalls of the closed system and saying that iTunes would sell songs in the

unrestricted MP3 format if the labels would make them available.

DEBATING STARBUCKS

Virginia Postrel, in her paean "In Praise of Chain Stores" (December *Atlantic*), makes what she thinks is the bold claim that "stores don't give places their character. Terrain and weather and culture do." But she neglects to consider that environment—including stores—acts on people. People accustomed to pursuing their needs blindly in big anonymous stores end up looking like anonymous integers in a world market. The chain store leads to the chain person.

Still, Postrel is right about one point: Having Starbucks in every spot of the world makes it easier to move from place to place, as the coffee shop is always "home away from home." A friend just moved to Paris from New York, knowing nothing about France. It was not too radical a move, she said. They have Starbucks! Was she going to learn the language soon, I asked? Oh no, why would that be necessary?

Karin Badt
Paris, France

Virginia Postrel replies:

Only someone with absolutely no powers of observation would think Paris and New York—or, for that matter, Los Angeles and New York, or Dallas and New York—are the same merely because they both have Starbucks. These days, however, such insensitivity is apparently a mark of the bored sophisticate. In vain, we stubborn Anglo-Saxon empiricists expect evidence for wild claims like "People accustomed to pursuing their needs blindly in big anonymous stores end up looking like anonymous integers in a world market."

Besides, not every difference is charming; ask anyone who has ever suffered through a painfully slow Parisian grocery-store line. The store is just as anonymous as a Wal-Mart Supercenter, but the cashier is far less efficient and friendly. A little more competition could do wonders for service quality.



"Penalty Kick." Ladakh, India.
Image courtesy of the human network.

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The generation that wouldn't trust anyone over 30



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Average life expectancy in the U.S. has risen to an all-time high. Great news, except that the amount of money people put away for retirement isn't rising at all. How is our nation going to make sure its citizens have the money to retire? Allstate has a few ideas:

1. EXAMINE SOCIAL SECURITY

Americans will not be able to rely solely on Social Security for a comfortable retirement. In the future, it's projected to cover an increasingly smaller percentage of the average retirement. There's debate as to whether it should be repaired or replaced. But what's clear is we need to reform Social Security *now*.

2. BOOST RETIREMENT PLAN ENROLLMENT

Companies should continue looking for ways to encourage employee participation in 401(k) plans. One proven method to increase retirement savings is

through company matches. Another is automatic enrollment—employees are signed up for savings plans when they join the company, unless they specifically opt out.

3. INCREASE PERSONAL SAVINGS

Ultimately, everyone is responsible for their own retirement. It's why we support laws that reward people for saving. Tax-advantaged savings vehicles, like annuities and IRAs, are two examples of products that can help allay Baby Boomers' biggest fear: living to see the well run dry.

Let's save retirement by saving for retirement.
THAT'S ALLSTATE'S STAND

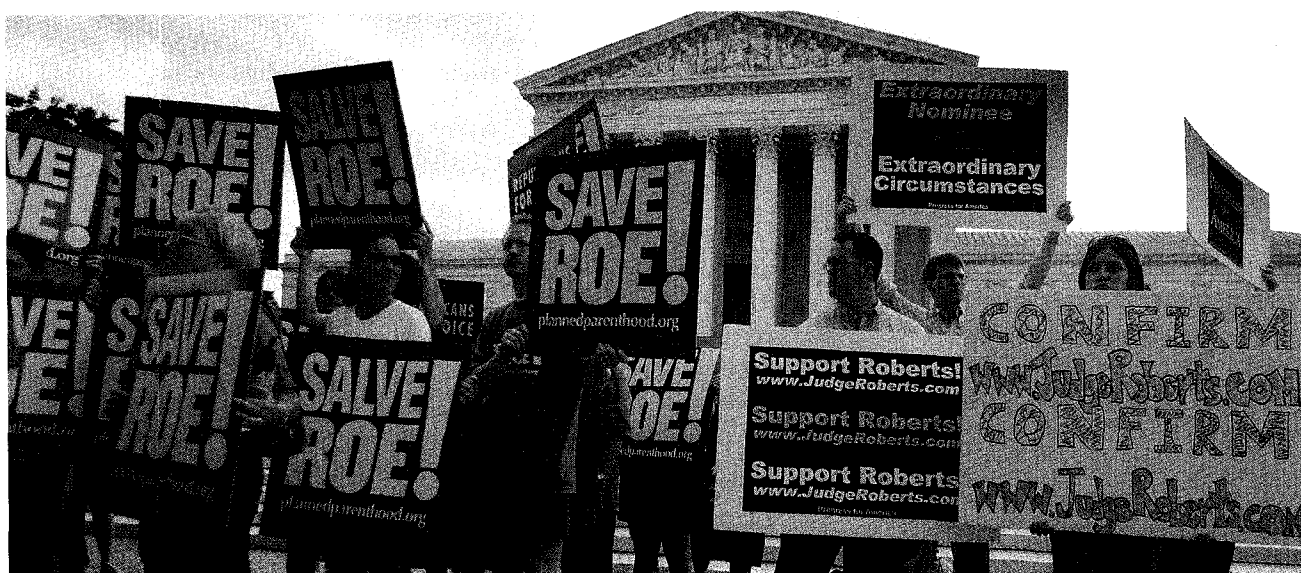


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THE AGENDA

APRIL 2007 THE ATLANTIC



COMMENT

The way to end culture wars is to slug them out state by state.

A Separate Peace

BY JONATHAN RAUCH

Mitt Romney, the former governor of Massachusetts and a 2008 Republican presidential candidate, is a thoughtful politician, for a politician. So it was not surprising to find him recently debating one of the country's core conundrums. It was a little surprising, though, to find him debating himself.

Romney believes abortion is wrong, but he thinks the decision on whether to allow it should be left to the states. In February, *National Journal* asked him if he favored a constitutional amendment banning abortion. No, he replied:

What I've indicated is that I am pro-life and that my hope is that the Supreme Court will give to the states ... their own ability to make their own decisions with regard to their own abortion law ... My view

is not to impose a single federal rule on the entire nation, a one-size fits all approach, but instead allow states to make their own decisions in this regard.

Romney also believes gay marriage is wrong, but he thinks the decision on whether to allow it should *not* be left to the states. Last year, he poured scorn on Senator John McCain, who (like Romney) opposes gay marriage, but who (unlike Romney) opposes a U.S. constitutional amendment banning it. "Look," Romney said, "if somebody says they're in favor of gay marriage, I respect that view. If someone says—like I do—that I oppose same-sex marriage, I respect that view. But those who try and pretend to have it both ways, I find it to be disingenuous."

Taking the two quotations side by side, one could be excused for supposing Romney was trying to have it both ways. However, in fairness to him, now is not the first time Republicans have argued with themselves over moral federalism—or, what may be a better term, *moral pluralism*: leaving states free to go their separate ways when a national moral consensus is lacking.

In 1973, when the Supreme Court (in *Roe v. Wade*) declared abortion to be a constitutional right, conservatives were outraged. But what to do? Republicans were divided. Abortion opponents wanted the practice banned by a constitutional amendment, and supporters of Ronald Reagan soon took up the cause. Reagan, of course, was preparing a conservative primary challenge to the

politically vulnerable and ideologically moderate Republican president, Gerald Ford—and Ford was in a bind, because his wife, Betty, had already endorsed *Roe* (“a great, great decision”).

Ford’s response was also to call for a constitutional amendment—but one that would return authority over abortion to the states, not impose a federal ban. In the end, Ford won the presidential nomination but lost the struggle within his party: The 1976 Republican platform called for “enactment of a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children.”

The more things change, the more they stay the same: In this decade, Vice President Cheney—a Ford administration alumnus, as it happens—has called

cuts deals and develops consensus, and into the realm of protest politics, which rejects compromise and fosters radicalism. Outraged abortion opponents mobilized; alarmed abortion-rights advocates countermobilized; the political parties migrated to extreme positions and entrenched themselves there; the Supreme Court became a punching bag; and abortion became an indigestible mass in the pit of the country’s political stomach.

Gay marriage started out looking similarly intractable and inflammable. As with abortion, a few liberal states began breaking with tradition, thereby initiating a broader moral debate; and, as with abortion, purists on both extremes denounced the middle as unsustainable

on gay marriage. Several adopted civil unions instead of gay marriage. One, Massachusetts, is tussling over efforts to revoke gay marriage.

The result is a diversity of practice that mirrors the diversity of opinion. And gay marriage, not incidentally, is moving out of the realm of protest politics and into the realm of normal politics; in the 2006 elections, the issue was distinctly less inflammatory than two years earlier. It is also moving out of the courts. According to Carrie Evans, the state legislative director of the Human Rights Campaign (a gay-rights organization), most gay-marriage litigation has already passed through the judicial pipeline; only four states have cases under way, and few other plausible venues remain. “It’s all going to shift to the state legislatures,” she says. “The state and national groups will have to go there.”

Barring the unexpected, then, same-sex marriage began in the courts and will wind up in the state legislatures and on state ballots: the abortion tape run backward. The issue will remain controversial, producing its share of flare-ups and fireworks; but it will become more tractable over time, as the country works its way toward a consensus. As a political issue, gay marriage will be around for years, but as a catalyst for culture war, it has already peaked.

Although I bow to no one in my support for gay marriage—society needs more marriages, not fewer, and gay couples need the protections and obligations of marriage, and gay individuals need the hope and promise of marriage—the last few years have provided a potent demonstration of the power of moral pluralism to act as a political shock absorber. Even moral absolutists—people who believe gay marriage is a basic human right or, for that matter, people who believe abortion is murder—should grudgingly support pluralism, because it makes the world safe for their moral activism by keeping the cultural peace. Someone should tell Mitt Romney. Maybe Mitt Romney could tell him. ▀

Jonathan Rauch is an *Atlantic* correspondent and a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution.

As a political issue, gay marriage will be around for years, but as a catalyst for culture war, it has already peaked.

for the gay-marriage issue to be left to the states. But his party’s cultural right has insisted on a national ban: not one gay marriage on U.S. soil! When President Bush sided with the right, he effectively cast the deciding vote, and moral pluralism lost.

Who was right, Cheney or Bush? Ford or Reagan? Romney or Romney? A priori, the answer isn’t obvious, but the country has recently run, in effect, a laboratory experiment. On abortion, it went with a uniform national rule. On gay marriage, it has gone the other way.

Abortion started in the state legislatures, where it was sometimes contentious but hardly the stuff of a nationwide culture war. Neither party’s national political platform had an abortion plank until 1976. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, some liberal-minded states began easing restrictive abortion laws. When the Supreme Court nationalized the issue, in 1973, it short-circuited a debate that was only just getting started.

By doing that, it moved abortion out of the realm of normal politics, which

or intolerable, saying that gay marriage (like abortion) must be illegal (or legal) everywhere in order to be effectively illegal (or legal) anywhere. The purists got help when two important actors preemptively rejected compromise. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ordered same-sex marriage in 2003, and then refused even to consider civil unions. That decision provoked President Bush’s equally provocative endorsement of a constitutional ban on gay marriage. The battle lines appeared to have been drawn for a national culture war, waged by extremes of left and right over the heads of a marginalized center.

But the political system, and the public, refused to be hustled. Congress rejected a federal constitutional ban. The federal courts stayed out of the argument (and Bush’s appointment of two conservative Supreme Court justices who look favorably on states’ rights probably ensures that the Court will keep its distance). With the federal government standing aside, the states got busy. All but a handful passed bans



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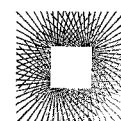
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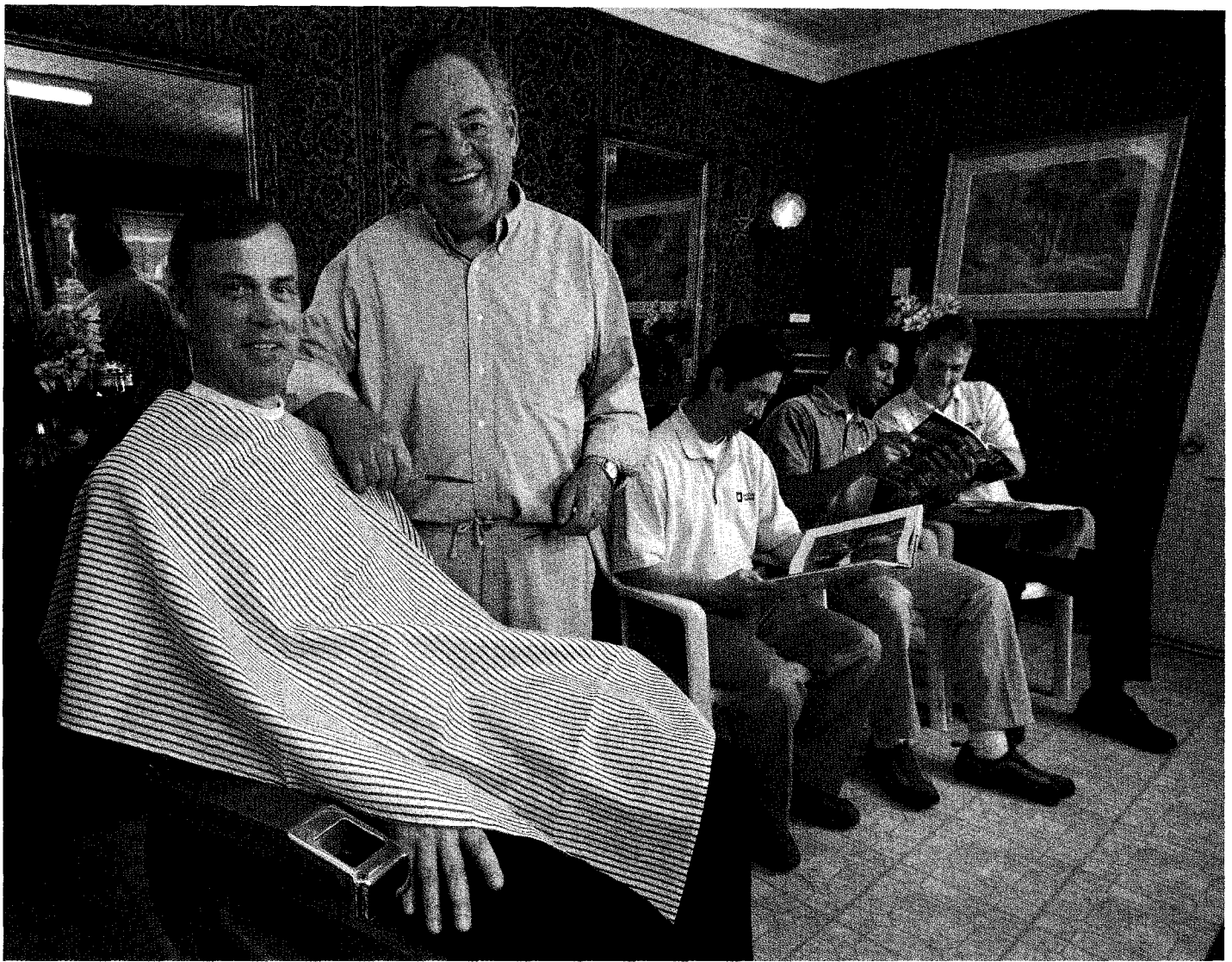
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This barber knows his cutting-edge automotive technology

I'm Henry Besanceney, the only barber in Honeoye Falls, a small town in upstate New York. When you have GM's top scientists in your chair like I do, you get to know a lot about the newest cutting edge technologies. A whole lot. I've learned they're engineering the first drivable hydrogen fuel cell by-wire powertrains. It's an innovation that will outperform today's engines on cost, power and durability. The only thing missing is the pollutants. That's because the only emission the fuel cells produce is pure, clean water vapor. Now that's refreshing!

They say GM is also employing other renewable fuel technologies in their vehicles, like E-85 ethanol made from corn. You'd have to talk to a barber in Nebraska about that one.

Henry A. Besanceney

Henry Besanceney

Only



CALENDAR

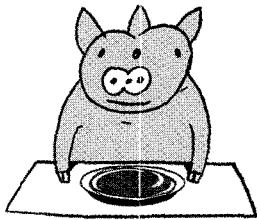
WHAT TO WATCH FOR IN THE WEEKS AHEAD

COMPILED BY MATTHEW QUIRK

APRIL 1

Empty Stalls

Despite Russia's shrinking population, the Duma's clampdown on immigrants continues today with a nationalist ban on foreign vendors in retail markets. To counteract effects of the ban, the government has ordered the markets to stay open and hold prices firm. Up to half of Russia's 12 million illegal immigrants may be deported.



APRIL 2

Test-Tube Steak

Today is the final chance for the public to weigh in on the FDA's decision on whether to allow cloned animals to be served as dinner. Bad news for studs: Initial reports found no serious health risks from

cloned animals' milk and meat. A final decision is expected by the end of the year.

APRIL 2

Tariff-ic

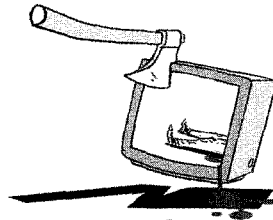
A little-discussed but far-reaching Commerce Department decision is due today regarding possible tariffs on paper imported from China, which may pave the way for a host of retaliatory duties on goods that the Chinese government subsidizes for export. The country is currently exempt.

APRIL 2

Sainthood, Sooner?

Speculation has been building that John Paul II's beatification (the first step toward sainthood) will be announced today, the second anniversary of the pontiff's death. (Curing a French nun of Parkinson's—which John Paul is reported to have done posthumously in 2005—should satisfy the requirement that candidates

perform a miracle from the afterlife.) John Paul broke tradition when he fast-tracked Mother Teresa's beatification after her death, in 1997.



APRIL 8

The Sopranos Swim With the Fishes

The casual violence and suburban angst of *The Sopranos*, which lifted HBO atop the TV-drama renaissance, enters its final arc today. Some fans fear that the show, which has been plagued by a fits-and-starts production schedule (with as many as 21 months between seasons), will go out with a *Godfather III*-like whimper.

APRIL 14–15

Big Growth, Small Agenda

The International Monetary Fund opens its spring meeting with great expectations: near 5 percent global growth in 2007. But for the lender of last resort, boom times are often slow times. Finance ministers have suggested that the IMF busy itself by surveying larger countries' financial health and sounding early warnings.

APRIL 17

Ring Down the Curtain

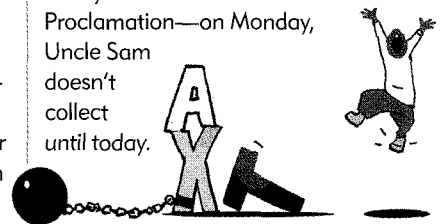
Like the *Lord of the Rings* films, J. R. R. Tolkien's canon is taking its time in drawing to a close. Today, the late author's *Children of Húrin* goes on sale. Set long before *Lord* and imbued with a more tragic tone, the tale was pieced

together by Tolkien's son, Christopher, from notes and fragments.

APRIL 17

Washington Taketh, Giveth

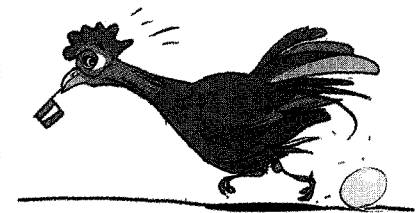
The calendar has aligned this year to give everyone a two-day extension on their taxes: With the dreaded April 15 falling on a Sunday and the District of Columbia's precocious celebration of Emancipation Day—D.C.'s slaves were freed nearly nine months before the Proclamation—on Monday, Uncle Sam doesn't collect until today.



APRIL 21

Singe, Don't Burn

Following last year's Bush-skewering performance by comedian Stephen Colbert, the host of tonight's White House Correspondents' Dinner will be the genial impressionist Rich Little.



APRIL 22

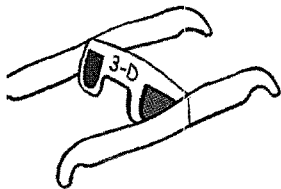
Ségo vs. Sarkozy

In the first round of France's presidential election, voters choose between Thatcherite tough guy Nicolas Sarkozy, who promises to restore the republic to glory and stand up to restive immigrants, and Ségolène Royal, whose personal charm and gauzy left-centrist platform recall Tony Blair and Bill Clinton.

ALSO THIS MONTH:

It Came From Outer Space

James Cameron begins shooting *Avatar*, a 3-D sci-fi flick with computer-generated actors and sets that promises to be a technological watershed. It's Cameron's first film since *Titanic* drew a box-office record \$1.8 billion.



Hug It Out

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visits Japan, the first high-level trip there in more than six years. Sino-Japanese relations are the frostiest they've been in decades due to former Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visits to a shrine commemorating Japanese veterans, including war criminals. The new prime minister, Shinzo Abe, hasn't visited the memorial, but says he won't rule out a trip.

African or Can't?

Oil-rich Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and one of its most corrupt, chooses a new president for the first time since military rule ended eight years ago. The effect may not be dramatic, as Olusegun Obasanjo—the current president and oil minister, and former military leader—attempts to elevate his heir apparent, Umaru Yar'Adua, but retain power behind the scenes.

THE WORLD IN NUMBERS

Mass migration has left many towns in Mexico half-empty, but much wealthier.

The Mexican Connection

BY MATTHEW QUIRK

Among the crumbling adobe shacks of rural Mexico, two-story California-style housing developments are rising. In the tiny city of Tlacolula, plots of land that sold for about \$10,000 in 1994 now cost \$60,000. Like the towns where they are going up, the new developments are partly empty. The home owners are among the many Mexican workers—nearly one in seven overall, and *half* the adult population of some communities, such as La Purísima and San Juan Mixtepec—who are in the United States. Typically working low-wage jobs, they send home much of their pay (41 percent on average, or \$300 a month) to support families left behind and build a better life for their return.

Remittances to Mexico exceed \$20 billion a year. By 2003, they had become the nation's second-largest source of external finance, ahead of tourism and foreign investment and just behind oil exports. That same year, then-President Vicente Fox noted that the roughly 20 million Mexican-origin workers in America create a larger gross product than Mexico itself.

Worldwide, remittances have surpassed direct aid in volume, and international development institutions (along with the governments of many less-developed countries) have recently seized upon them as a key to economic growth in the global South. The United States is the largest source of remittances—Saudi Arabia, with its armies of serflike guest workers, is No. 2—and Mexico the largest recipient of U.S. funds.

The map to the right, based in part on work by Raúl Hernández-Coss for the World Bank, shows the flow of remittances from different parts of the United States to various states in Mexico—a mirror image of migration flows from south to north. Though *mass* migration from Mexico to the United States is a relatively recent phenomenon, it has grown through century-old social networks linking specific immigrant communities in America to their hometowns in Mexico. Most of these networks have their roots in rural Mexico, though migration from urban areas is now increasing as well.

Remittances are unquestionably a boon to Mexican living standards, but they are also changing the character of Mexican life. In some towns with a long history of migration, leaving home to work in the United States has become a rite of passage for young men, often in place of completing school. Many of these towns are bereft of men and dominated by single-parent households. The money flowing in reduces local incentives to work and fuels inflation. Many of the houses being built boost real-estate prices beyond the reach of people working in Mexico.

Typically the men—most Mexican emigrants are men, though in border states women increasingly cross over—leave believing that they will eventually return. But most do not. U.S. crackdowns on illegal immigration have made the trip north dangerous and expensive (financing an illegal entry can cost \$20,000 or more), so workers sometimes must remain for years just

Mexican population, by county (2000)

- 0–20,000
- 20,001–90,000
- 90,001–300,000
- 300,001–800,000
- >800,000

Total remittances to Mexico, by state (2006, in millions of U.S. dollars)

- \$25–\$250
- \$251–\$500
- \$501–\$850
- \$851–\$1,500
- >\$1,500

Staying Put

The relatively small remittance flow to Mexico's border states attests to their economic strength. The spread of factories along the border to perform cheap manufacturing for U.S. companies allows many Mexicans to find work without crossing over.

to repay transit debts. As seasonal visits to Mexican hometowns become more difficult and rare, family ties weaken. Perversely, stepped-up attempts to keep illegal immigrants out of the United States have resulted in a migrant population more likely to stay. The fact that more than \$20 billion is sent back to Mexico each year is evidence of a robust labor flow that seems to benefit both economies. It's also a sign of workers stuck between two worlds. ■

Matthew Quirk is an Atlantic staff editor.

Community Development (from 2,000 miles away)

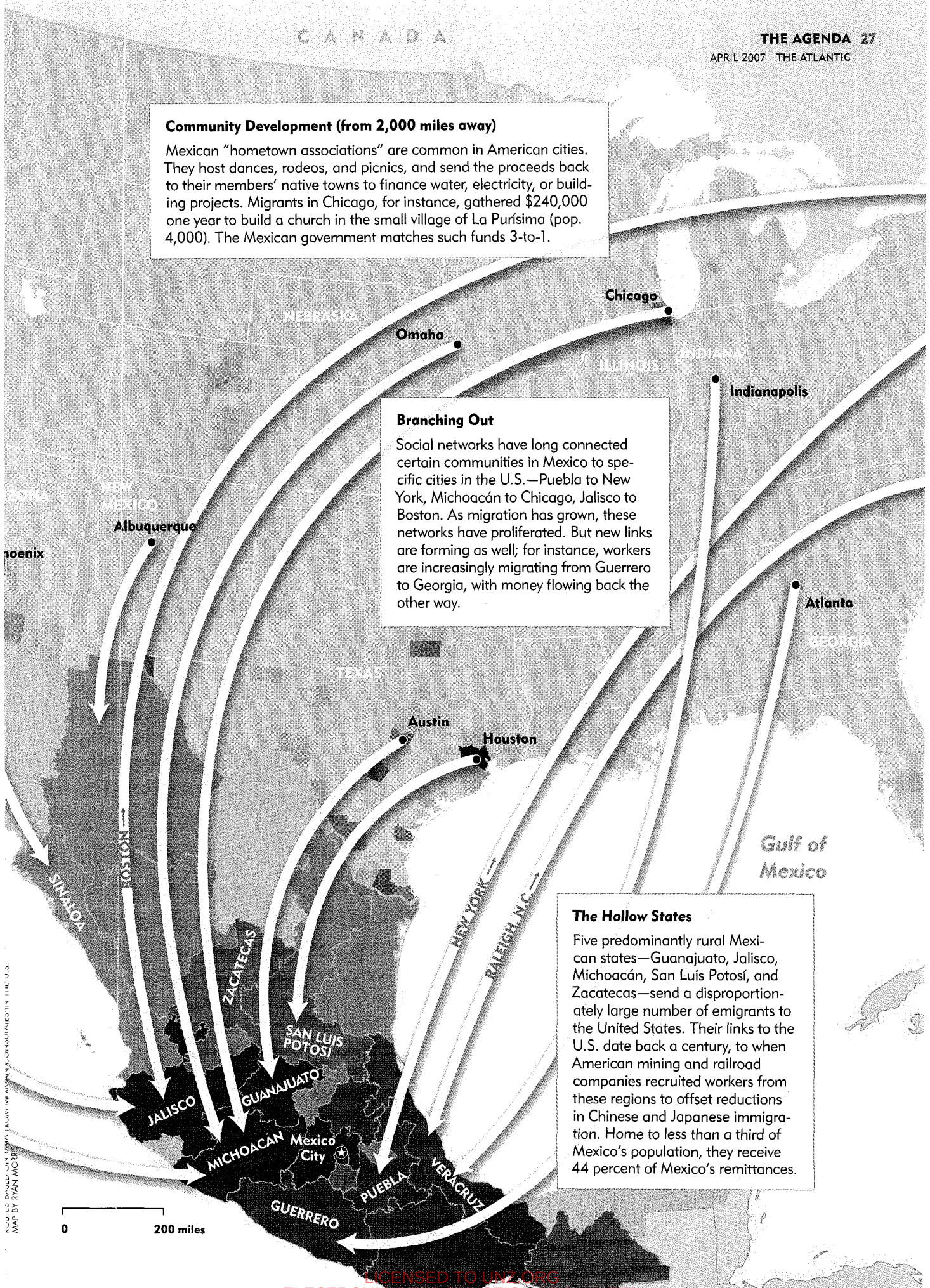
Mexican "hometown associations" are common in American cities. They host dances, rodeos, and picnics, and send the proceeds back to their members' native towns to finance water, electricity, or building projects. Migrants in Chicago, for instance, gathered \$240,000 one year to build a church in the small village of La Purísima (pop. 4,000). The Mexican government matches such funds 3-to-1.

Branching Out

Social networks have long connected certain communities in Mexico to specific cities in the U.S.—Puebla to New York, Michoacán to Chicago, Jalisco to Boston. As migration has grown, these networks have proliferated. But new links are forming as well; for instance, workers are increasingly migrating from Guerrero to Georgia, with money flowing back the other way.

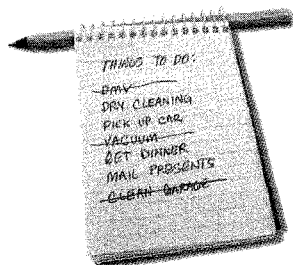
The Hollow States

Five predominantly rural Mexican states—Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, San Luis Potosí, and Zacatecas—send a disproportionately large number of emigrants to the United States. Their links to the U.S. date back a century, to when American mining and railroad companies recruited workers from these regions to offset reductions in Chinese and Japanese immigration. Home to less than a third of Mexico's population, they receive 44 percent of Mexico's remittances.



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Risky Business

As mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani cracked down heavily on prostitution, forcing women who had previously solicited in public off the streets. The result, according to a new paper, was an environment that actually made women more likely to make prostitution a career rather than a temporary means of making ends meet. The move indoors had two major effects. On the one hand, it made women feel more secure—less vulnerable to arrest and violence from either johns or pimps—and more likely to “identify with sex work positively, particularly with the flexibility to set one’s own hours and the steady income the work often entails.” At the same time, it made them less likely to connect with the kind of institutions that could help them find better, safer, legal employment. In the end, women were more likely to take a “professional and careerist orientation” toward the oldest profession rather than leave it behind.

—“Vice Careers,” Alexandra K. Murphy and Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh, *Qualitative Sociology*

ROMANCE

Smile Like You Mean It

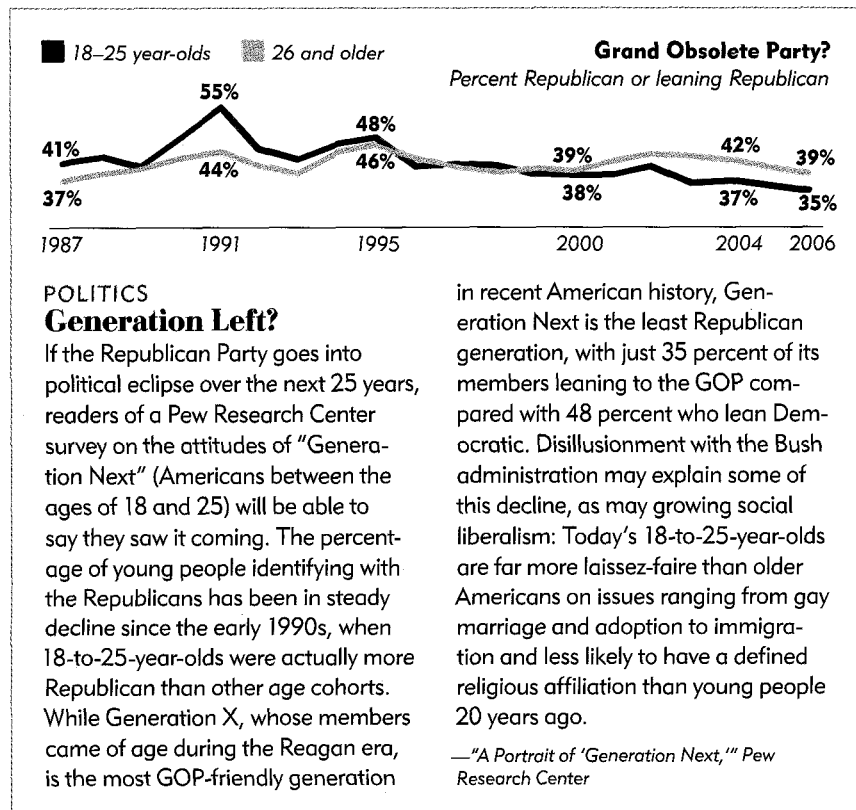
Noting that female animals—from guppies to quail—are more likely to be drawn to males paired off with other females, a group of researchers looked for a similar effect in humans. They asked female and male subjects to compare the attractiveness of eight pairs of male faces. Then they showed participants the same faces in a slideshow, with each pair separated by a photo of a woman, either smiling or looking neutral and turned toward one of the two men. When shown the original pairs again, the women increased their preference for a man who’d had a smiling female face turned in his direction during the slideshow; their preference for a man with an unsmiling woman turned his way decreased. The male subjects, meanwhile, were more likely to increase their preference for a man who was being regarded neutrally by a woman



WOMEN FIND a man more attractive if another woman smiles at him.

than for one who was being smiled at. Thus, the authors suggest, “within-sex competition promotes negative attitudes among men towards other men who are the target of positive social interest from women.”

—“Social Transmission of Face Preferences Among Humans,” B. C. Jones et al., *Proceedings of the Royal Society*

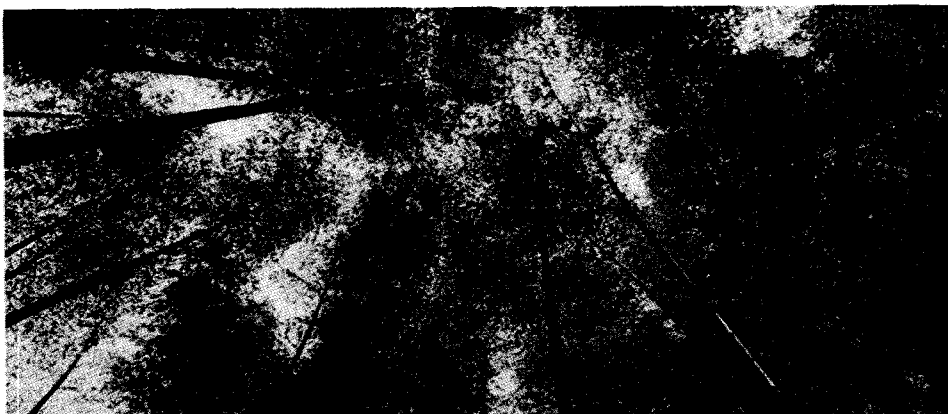


CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Live Free and Die

Leaving prison can be hazardous to your health, while staying behind bars can actually increase your life expectancy, according to two studies on mortality and incarceration. Of 30,237 inmates released from prison in Washington State between 1999 and 2003, 443 died within two years of their release—a death rate 3.5 times that of other state residents. In the first two weeks after release, the death rate for former prisoners was 12.7 times the state death rate, with drug overdose the most common cause of death. Meanwhile, the mortality rate inside all state prisons is 19 percent lower than in the U.S. adult population as a whole. For men under 45, in particular, prison is safer than the streets; for convicts over 55, however, prison death rates were 56 percent higher than on the outside.

—“Release From Prison—A High Risk of Death for Former Inmates,” Ingrid A. Binswanger et al., *New England Journal of Medicine*; “Medical Causes of Death in State Prisons, 2001–2004,” Bureau of Justice Statistics



The value of seeing the whole forest.

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and Philip Morris USA

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MEDIA

Watch and Listen

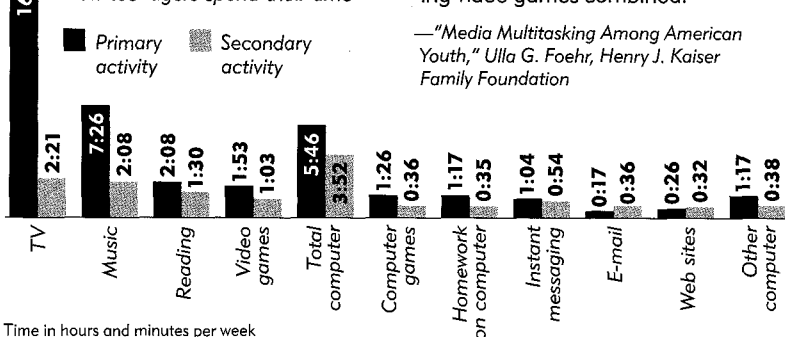
Multitasking is increasingly second nature for young Americans, who consume a growing share of their media out of the corners of their eyes, or ears. A new study from the Kaiser Family Foundation surveyed students in grades seven through twelve on their media-consumption habits, and found that 58 percent usually consume some

other form of media while they read, another 63 percent typically multitask while listening to music, and 62 percent usually do so while using the computer. The students surveyed were slightly less likely to multitask while watching television, which probably reflects the sheer amount of time the teenagers spent watching TV and DVDs. Overall, the teenagers surveyed spent more time watching (or half-watching) television than they spent reading, writing e-mail, surfing the Internet, and playing video games combined.

—"Media Multitasking Among American Youth," Ulla G. Foehr, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

Your Divided Attention, Please

How teenagers spend their time



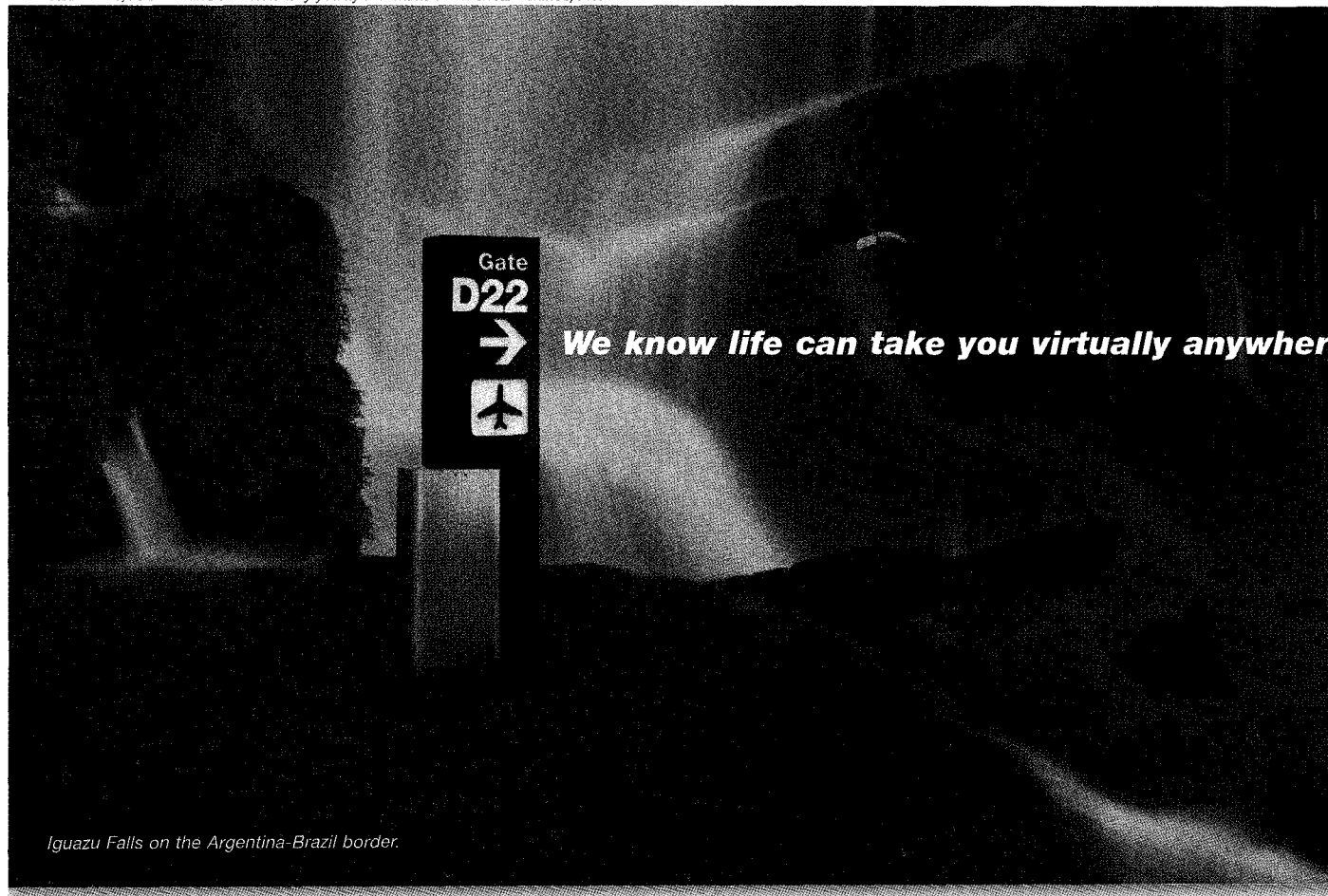
POLITICS

Democracy's Discontents

To end a civil war and establish a democracy, you need to give every faction a sense that it can attain power peacefully—or so runs the political-science conventional wisdom. But a new paper begs to differ. Using the case of Colombia's mid-century civil war, known as "La Violencia," in which the country's Liberal and Conservative parties formed militias and fought one another, the authors find that the interparty warfare was most intense in municipalities where the two parties were evenly matched and had roughly equal chances of taking power through peaceful means. Thus their proposed alternative model of political conflict holds that "in a situation where all groups have a high chance of winning an election, they may also have a high chance of winning a fight," and so be more likely to choose open war, with its chance for a winner-take-all outcome, over the ballot box.

—"When Is Democracy an Equilibrium?" Mario Chacon, James A. Robinson, Ragnar Torvik, NBER

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Iguazu Falls on the Argentina-Brazil border.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Running Dry

Iran's claim that it needs nuclear technology for power plants has always sounded fishy, not least because of the country's vast oil reserves. But a new analysis asks whether Iranian oil might run short sooner than we think. Estimates of Iranian oil exports project a decrease in coming years, and predicted growth in domestic demand for oil, coupled with the rate at which Iran is depleting its reserves, will necessitate an expansion of oil production. That will be difficult, however, since Iran's refineries are outdated and the government doesn't have the money to build new ones. The government subsidizes gasoline so heavily (Iranians pay only \$0.34 a gallon) that the state could not hope to profit from costly renovation of its refineries, and its own officials claim it will be cheaper just to import gasoline and leave Iranian oil undisturbed under the



CRUDE AWAKENING: Are Iranian oil exports doomed?

earth. Unless Iran's oil sector becomes dramatically more efficient and the government warms to the possibility of exploration and extraction by foreigners, Iran could stop exporting oil as early as 2014—which means that

when Iran claims to need nuclear know-how for its own power requirements, it just might be telling the truth.

—“The Iranian Petroleum Crisis and United States National Security,” Roger Stern, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

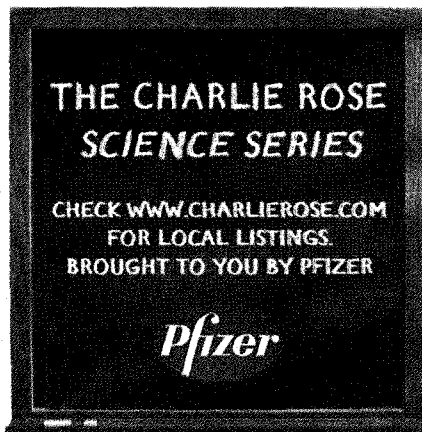
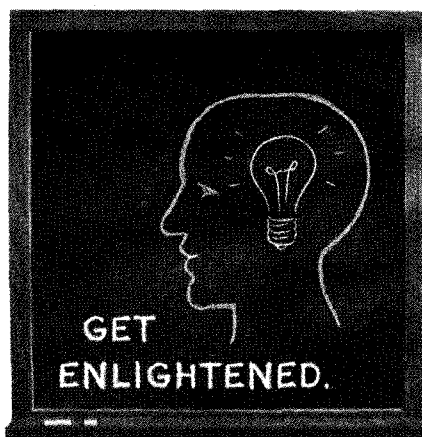
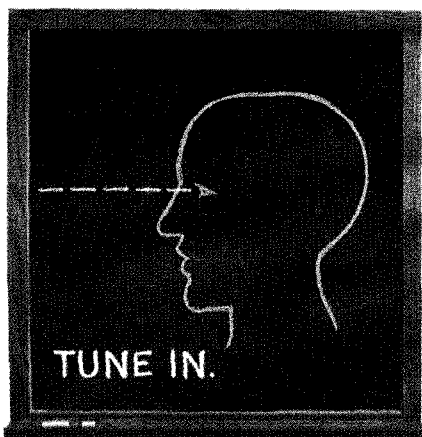
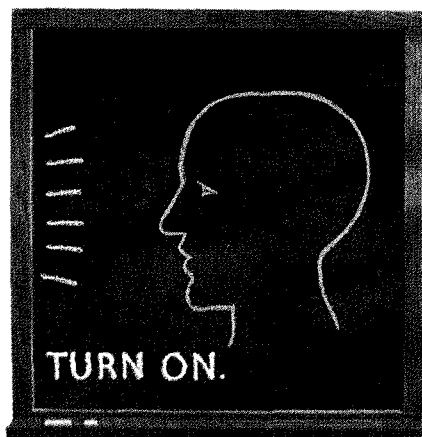
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PERSONAL FINANCE The Taxman Cometh

If you live in Fairfield, Connecticut, or Westchester, New York, you're probably not surprised that your county made the Tax Foundation's list of the 10 counties with the highest average individual income-tax burden (calculated as a percentage of adjusted gross income). More surprising, perhaps, is the presence of Union County, South Dakota, where more than 17 percent of the average taxpayer's income goes to Uncle Sam (a yearly tax bill of \$14,006). South Dakota is also represented among the 10 counties with the lowest average tax burdens—by Todd and Shannon counties, both parts of Indian reservations, and both among the few places in America where taxpayers receive more in tax credits than they pay in taxes every year (an annual per-taxpayer total of \$92 in Todd County and \$337 in Shannon).

—“IRS Data Reveal Which Congressional Districts Pay the Highest Federal Income Taxes,” Gerald Prante, Tax Foundation

Who Foots the Bill?

Federal individual income tax as a percentage of adjusted gross income

The Highest-Paying Counties ...

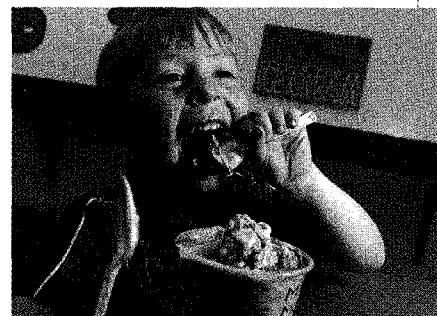
New York (Manhattan) (NY)	20.0%
Fairfield (CT)	19.4%
Teton (WY)	18.3%
Westchester (NY)	17.8%
Pitkin (CO)	17.6%
Collier (FL)	17.4%
Union (SD)	17.2%
Marin (CA)	16.8%
Somerset (NJ)	16.8%
Morris (NJ)	16.3%

... Versus the Lowest-Paying Counties

Quitman (MS)	-0.1%
Maverick (TX)	-0.4%
Todd (SD)	-0.4%
Noxubee (MS)	-0.5%
Holmes (MS)	-0.5%
Hudspeth (TX)	-1.1%
Shannon (SD)	-1.5%
Zavala (TX)	-2.6%
Issaquena (MS)	-3.3%
Starr (TX)	-4.1%

PSYCHOLOGY Guilty Pleasures

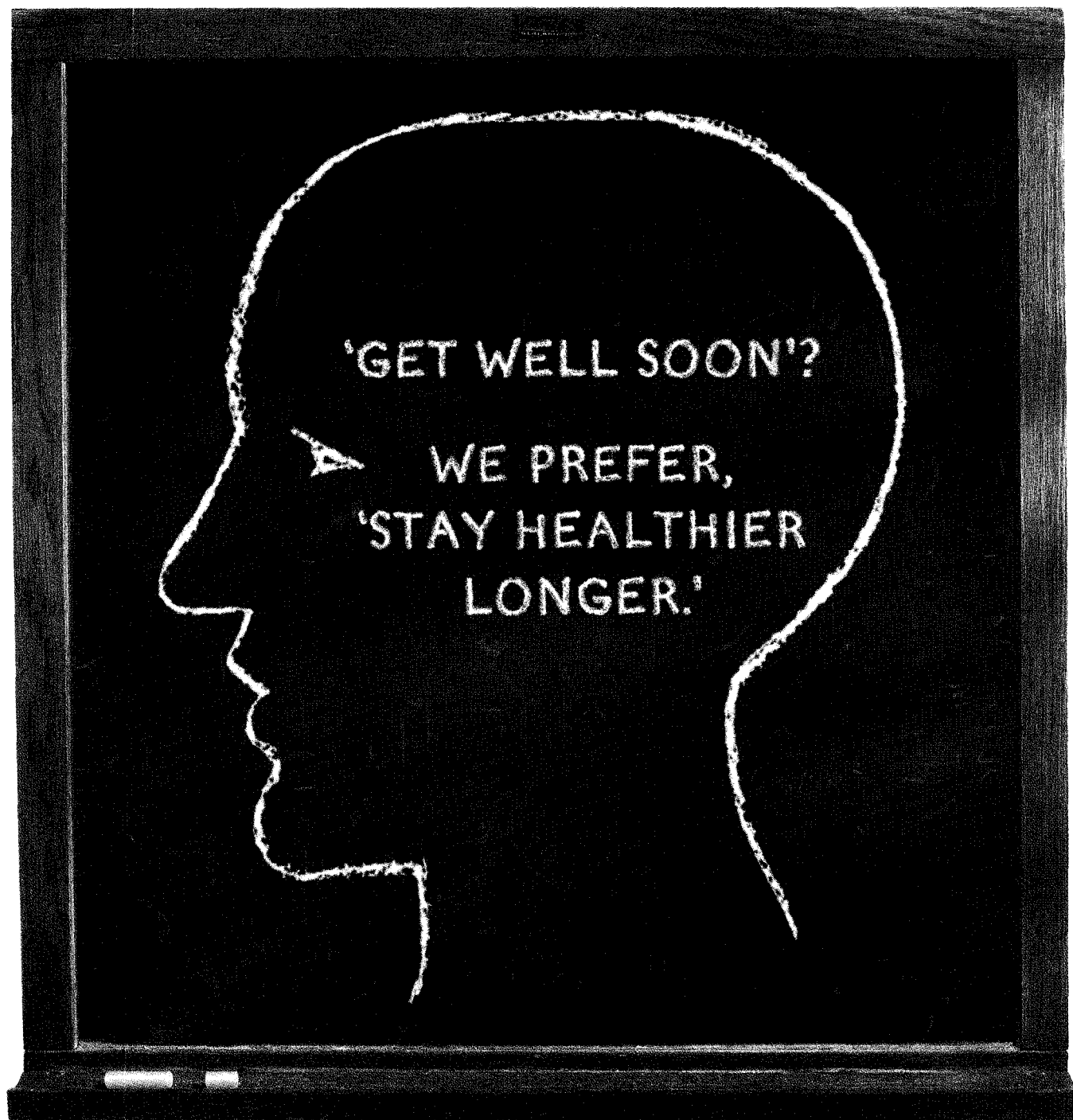
A study in the *Journal of Consumer Research* argues that you probably should have eaten that third glazed doughnut after all. The authors find that regret over indulgence and gluttony diminishes with time, but regret over missing out—doing the responsible thing and deferring gratification—only increases. The authors contrast two approaches to temptation: myopia (the tendency to enjoy pleasures in the present, and possibly pay for them later) and hyperopia (giving up immediate pleasures in favor of future ones). College students asked to reflect on their most recent and previous winter-break activities said that as time passed they regretted not having had fun more than they regretted not having studied or worked. One reason for this phenomenon, the authors hypothesize, is that indulgence guilt is a “hot” emotion, leading to intense but momentary pangs of conscience. Wistful regret over missed chances, on the other hand, creeps up slowly, and is less intense, but lasts longer. Even if we scold ourselves



MIGHT AS WELL eat that sundae. You'll regret it, but not for very long.

for sybaritic and spendthrift ways at the time, over months or years we are willing to forgive ourselves. This conclusion contradicts the traditional assumption that short-term thinking leads to long-term regret. Indeed, the authors write, it suggests that long-term thinking is worst in the long term—that it will minimize your guilt in the here-and-now, but over the long haul it will lead to chronic, throbbing remorse over junk food uneaten and money unspent.

—“Repenting Hyperopia: An Analysis of Self-Control Regrets,” Ran Kivetz and Anat Keinan, *Journal of Consumer Research*



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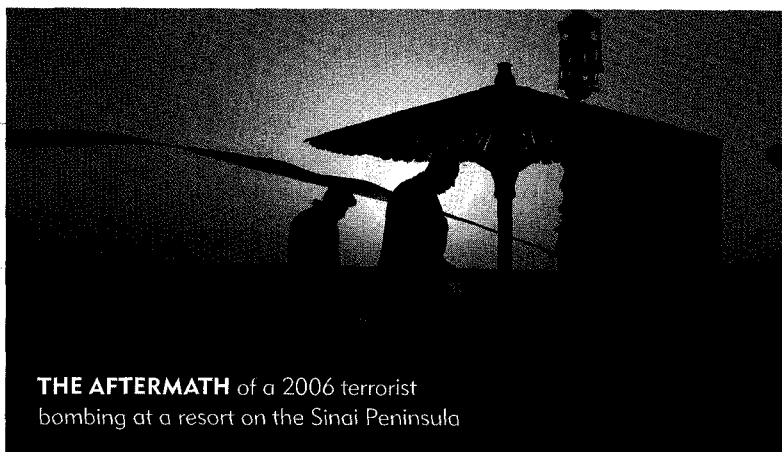
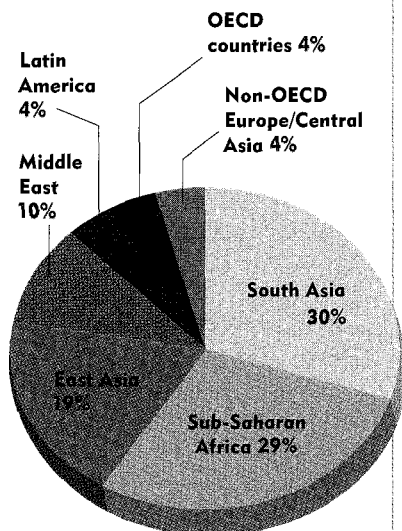
MEDICINE

The Health of Nations

A worldwide outbreak of bird flu that followed the pattern of the 1918–1920 influenza pandemic would kill between 51 million and 81 million people, according to a new study—but if history repeated itself, very few of the dead would be Americans or residents of other wealthy nations. The authors compared death rates across 27 countries during the period 1915–1923 and found that the rates varied wildly from place to place, even within a single country: In British India, for instance, the mortality rate ranged from 2.1 percent in Burma to 7.8 percent in the province of Berar. The best explanation for this variation turned out to be per capita income alone; for every 10 percent increase in income, the death rate declined by roughly 10 percent. Given present income variations, a flu pandemic that followed a similar pattern would claim just 4 percent of its victims in the developed world—here defined as members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

—“Estimation of Potential Global Pandemic Influenza Mortality on the Basis of Vital Registry Data From the 1918–20 Pandemic: A Quantitative Analysis,” C. Murray et al., *The Lancet*

If a Flu Pandemic Strikes ... Projected distribution of deaths



THE AFTERMATH of a 2006 terrorist bombing at a resort on the Sinai Peninsula

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Strife in Sinai

After 15 years of Israeli occupation, control of the Sinai Peninsula returned to Egypt in 1982. Since then, according to a new report, tensions have developed between the central government in Cairo and the Sinai's inhabitants—and as a result, Egypt now faces a homegrown terrorist threat. Palestinians and Bedouins populate the Sinai, and neither group shares the “Pharaonic heritage” of Egypt's Nile Valley population. And for the past two decades, Cairo has made no concerted attempt to integrate them into the larger Egyptian commonwealth; instead, it has encouraged migrants from the Nile Valley to settle on the peninsula, promoted tourist resorts

there at the expense of residents' land rights, and discriminated against the locals in hiring and housing. These grievances may have helped create the Sinai-based terrorist network that carried out a series of bombings over the past three years, targeting civilians and particularly tourists. The network calls itself Tawhid wa Jihad (“Oneness and Struggle”), and while its ideology partakes of al-Qaeda-style Salafism, the report argues that its concerns are mainly local: The group perceives the Egyptians as occupiers, like the Israelis and British before them, and unless Cairo can change that perception, the Sinai will continue to breed radicalism and violence.

—“Egypt's Sinai Question,” *International Crisis Group*

MEDICINE

Eugenics in the Womb

How widespread is the practice of prenatal eugenics—that is, the use of abortion to eliminate fetuses that have genetic abnormalities? A new paper offers some speculation. The data are far from comprehensive, but it's possible to make estimates—for instance, that nearly 30 percent of the roughly 6,150 Down syndrome fetuses that are conceived in the United States every year end up being aborted. The numbers from studies conducted overseas are higher, ranging from 32 percent in Western Australia to more than 80 percent in Taiwan and Paris. Down syndrome fetuses are not the only ones being selectively aborted: Data from Europe for 1995–1999 suggest that roughly 40 percent of fetuses with any of 11 congenital disorders were aborted in that period, and a study of the G8 industrialized countries found that anywhere from 30,000 to 40,000 fetuses on course to suffer from birth defects were aborted

in 2002. In the long run, the author suggests, prenatal screenings will grow more comprehensive and may eventually cover “all known disease genes,” making it possible for parents to abort a fetus with, say, “a 68% probability of developing breast cancer by the age of 80.” Given the “invasive” nature of amniocentesis and abortion, however, a more popular option might be in vitro fertilization, or IVF, which would be accompanied by “pre-implantation genetic diagnosis” to screen out disorders. Of course, “nature has contrived a cheap, easy and enjoyable way to conceive a child,” the author allows, and “IVF is none of these things.” But the “clear economic benefits,” if nothing else, guarantee that neo-eugenics, in one form or another, will continue to spread.

—“The Future of Neo-Eugenics,” Armand Marie Leroi, *EMBO reports*

For links to the documents discussed on this page, visit www.theatlantic.com/doc/200704/primarysources.

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PUTIN'S REIGN

The Atlantic recently asked a group of foreign-policy authorities about Russian President Vladimir Putin's leadership and relations with the West.

Q: On balance, has Russia under Putin helped or hurt American economic and security interests?

69% HURT

"Putin has not cooperated in the 'war on terror' but [instead has] used it as a justification for his excesses in Chechnya. On Iran, Putin has consistently sabotaged any chance to send a blunt and cohesive signal that nuclear proliferation has a cost."

"Early on, the Bush administration had high hopes that Russia would choose to integrate more closely with Western economic and security institutions—and liberalize its economy and society in the process. Those hopes have not been realized."

"In general, Russians feel that Putin has put Russia back on the map, helped the economy, and [improved individual rights from a decade ago], even if there is not yet full-fledged democracy ... From an American-security perspective, however, Russia has at the very least complicated our military, political, and economic interests ... [Nonetheless], returning Russia to the enemies list is not productive in the world in which we live."

31% HELPED

"Putin's bark has been much worse than his bite. Despite the confrontational rhetoric, Russia has cooperated with the United States on a host of foreign-policy issues, including combating terror and facilitating the war in Afghanistan. The most significant divergence from the United States is on Iran, where Moscow has hampered Washington's efforts to convince Tehran to shut down its nuclear program."

"Keeping Russia from falling apart and [keeping] its nuclear weapons generally secure have been two big and unexpected accomplishments [of Putin's]."

Q: Given Putin's record of governance, should Russia's membership in the Group of Eight be reconsidered?

59% NO

"The G8 is already anachronistic: It's clear that on most issues on the G8 agenda, key countries are not presently included. Therefore, Russia should stay on as part of a 'GX,' which would include, at least, China, India, Brazil, and South Africa. This would obviate the problem of having Russia as the only 'semi-democracy' among the eight."

"Kicking Russia out of the G8 will only support hard-line nationalists within Russia and diminish any leverage the West has. Better to establish criteria that G8 members have to meet to stay in, to create some possible future pressure points."

"Not if the G8 wants to continue to be relevant. Why we think we are the world's schoolmarm, scolding other great powers for following their own interests, is beyond childish ... it is dangerous."

41% YES

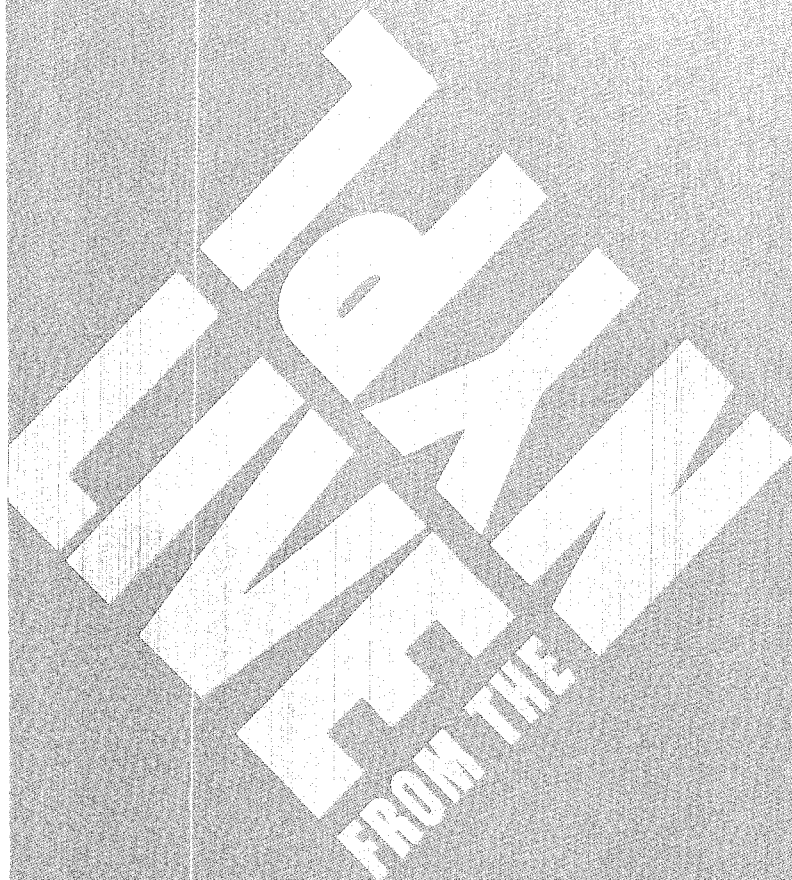
"The G8 is a club of responsible global stakeholders, not a club of superpowers. Admission should be tied to responsible global behavior. Russia's energy extortion merits suspension from the G8."

"Russia was invited to join the G8 because of its movement toward economic and political liberalization. The [reversion] to state control of the economy and presidential control of politics should have consequences—starting with [Russia] being thrown out of the G8."

"Kick them out. Take away the oil [from Russia], and all you have left is a crumbling, corrupt dictatorship with a mountain of nuclear weapons."

PARTICIPANTS (42): Kenneth Adelman, Graham Allison, Ronald Asmus, Samuel Berger, Max Boot, Stephen Bosworth, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Daniel Byman, Warren Christopher, Wesley Clark, Richard Clarke, Eliot Cohen, William Cohen, Ivo Daalder, Lawrence Eagleburger, Douglas Feith, Jay Garner, Leslie Gelb, Marc Grossman, John Hamre, Gary Hart, Bruce Hoffman, John Hulsman, Robert Hunter, Tony Judt, David Kay, Andrew Krepinovich, Charles Kupchan, John Lehman, James Lindsay, John McLaughlin, William Nash, Joseph Nye, Carlos Pascual, Thomas Pickering, Kenneth Pollack, Joseph Ralston, Susan Rice, Wendy Sherman, Anne-Marie Slaughter, James Steinberg, Anthony Zinni.

Not all participants answered both questions.



SPRING 07

February 14 **ALINE & R. CRUMB**
February 16 **WERNER HERZOG**
with Paul Holdengräber
March 6 **ANDRÉ ACIMAN**
& **COLM TÓIBÍN**
March 7 **WILLIAM T. VOLLMANN**
March 10 **MIRA NAIR**
& **JHUMPA LAHIRI**
March 26 **CLIVE JAMES**
with Paul Holdengräber
April 9 A Tribute to **PRIMO LEVI**
April 10 **LESLIE BENNETTS**

April 13 **JAN MORRIS**
with Paul Holdengräber
April 20 **BEN KATCHOR**
& **MARK MULCAHY***
April 23 **JULIA ALVAREZ**
April 29 **PEN WORLD VOICES**
Voyage & the Voyeur noon
Ryszard Kapuscinski: A Tribute 2 pm
The Erotic & The Forbidden 4 pm
May 4 **ADAM PHILLIPS**
with Paul Holdengräber
May 7 **CHRISTOPHER**
HITCHENS
May 8, 15, 22 **ALMA**
GUILLERMOPRIETO*
May 24 **REBECCA MEAD**
June 27 **GÜNTER GRASS**

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FIRST PRINCIPLES

What war on the middle class?

The Phantom Menace

BY CLIVE CROOK

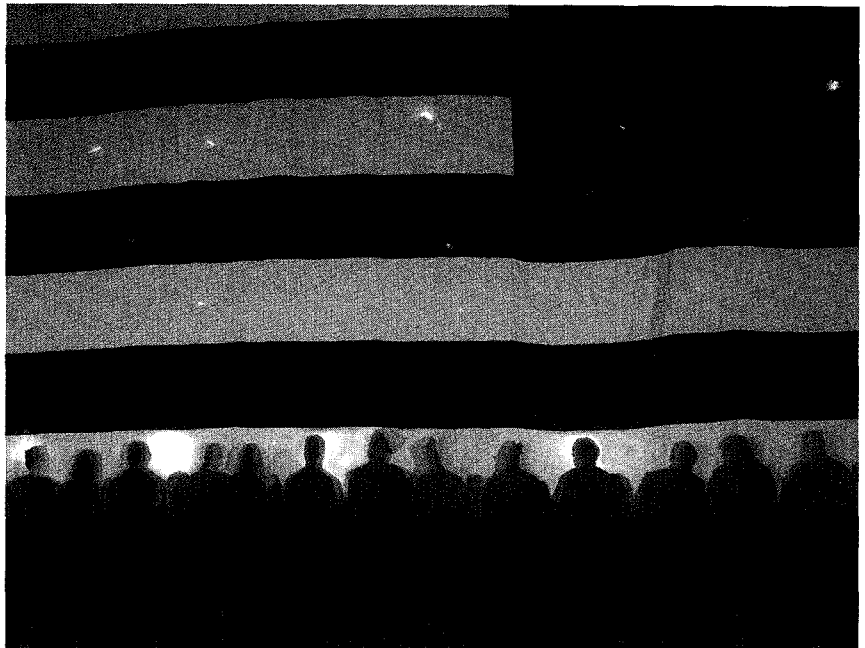
Englishmen are thought to be preoccupied with social class, and it pains me that I am about to conform (not for the first time) to stereotype. In fact the stereotype is out of date. You might think I'm protesting too much, but the truth is I gave hardly a thought to the issue for years—not until I came to live and work in the supposedly classless United States.

By the time I left England in 2005, class was no longer a very interesting subject. Of course you could still divide the country's people according to sociologically pregnant signifiers such as manners and elocution. You can do that kind of dividing up almost anywhere, including here, since in this sense there is no such thing as a classless society. Politically speaking, however, class in England lost the last of its salience in the 1990s. Today you rarely, if ever, hear a British politician mention the subject.

You could not say the same of the United States, though, could you? In this country, voters and politicians seem to think and talk about little else, at least when it comes to domestic affairs.

The middle class of this country, our historic backbone and our best hope for a strong society in the future, is losing its place at the table. Our workers know this, through painful experience. Our white-collar professionals are beginning to understand it, as their jobs start disappearing also.

That was Senator James Webb, in the Democratic Party's much-praised response to President Bush's State of the Union address. He was even more outspoken last year in an article for *The Wall Street Journal*, aptly titled "Class Struggle":



The most important—and unfortunately the least debated—issue in politics today is our society's steady drift toward a class-based system, the likes of which we have not seen since the 19th century.

Webb was wrong to say the issue is not much debated. The middle class and its many burdens and grievances are the organizing idea for almost everything Democrats and Republicans alike have to say about the economy. And it's not just politicians. Commentators are cheering them on. (Lou Dobbs's new book defines this resurgent populist genre in its title: *War on the Middle Class*.)

How strange this American appeal to class interests is, at least to an Old Worlder like me. England used to have, in the European fashion, three classes: posh gentry, professional bourgeoisie, and manual-laboring working class. *Middle-class* was a term of disapprobation: To call

somebody middle class was to say they were smug and complacent. Clever English progressives, whose political home was the pre-1994 Labour Party, spoke up for the working class; dull Tories, "the Stupid Party," were the traditional representatives of the middle class. Then Margaret Thatcher broadened the base, and begat Tony Blair; and class largely disappeared from the parties' calculations.

America's class structure, judging by how often politicians refer to it, has increasing political weight. But the United States appears to lack a working class—the whole point, as Marx explained, of having classes in the first place. Instead it has rich people; a politically impotent underclass (for whom nobody speaks up); and a remarkably expansive, proud, and patriotic middle class, which both parties woo. The incomes of Americans identifying themselves as middle class might run from

\$25,000 (about half of median household earnings) to 20 or 30 times that. In America, it is scarcely exaggerating to say that if you aren't actually poor, and if you have fewer than three homes and do not commute in a limousine or helicopter, you call yourself middle-class.

The vast width of this middle, some three-quarters of the population, has long been a great source of economic strength to the country. I am not the first to notice that America has exalted its bourgeois convictions on the importance of work, education, and self-reliance, or that those are the values that give strongest support to enterprise, innovation, and economic growth.

The heft of the country's middle class has been a *political* asset, too. Since the poor don't vote and the rich are too few to mention, the middle class chooses all by itself who runs the country. The electorate is divided, to be sure, but mainly by noneconomic values. The convergence of perceived economic interests means that the political parties in the U.S. are both far closer to a common economic center than their European counterparts are, and closer to each other than they themselves would like to admit. Policies are presented—and to some extent, at least, must be devised—in such a way as to appeal to this great, broad mass of middle-class Americans. And that is good. If you doubt it, study some European economic history.

However, when politicians and commentators talk about a “war” on the middle class, that is not so good. Invoking an enemy who is prospering at the expense of most (“decent, hard-working”) Americans is un conducive to wise policy. It casts the problem as an issue of distribution—a struggle for the spoils. But the prospects of the great mass of Americans, as a matter of arithmetic, cannot be much improved by mere redistribution. There are too few designated losers.

And who could this Other, this segment profiting at the expense of the middle class, be? The poor? That hardly seems likely. So this leaves just the rich—that sliver of chauffeured plutocrats—

and foreigners. Designating the rich as the enemy, though, is likely to be counterproductive. Thriving enterprise and magnificent rewards at the top tend to go together. So do a vibrant economy and liberal regimes for international trade and immigration. If you doubt it ... well, I already said that.

Admittedly, America's plutocrats have been pushing their luck recently. They were already doing fabulously well by any standard, even before the remarkable and somewhat mysterious surge in their pretax incomes that started in the mid-1990s; also before the tax cuts of 2001–2003, so brazenly skewed to their advantage. One wonders whether the administration has actually done the rich any favors, by piling it on that way. Most of the tax cuts (due to expire in any case in 2010) are likely to be reversed by the new Congress. For the good of the broader economy—for the good, that is, of the middle class—the backlash probably ought to stop there, but who knows? If it goes further, the plutocracy will have Bush to thank. Foreign trade and immigration are different cases, and more straightforward. Assaulting those particular enemies (foreign businesses and immigrants) will be instantly self-defeating. Any kind of new restriction is going to hurt the middle class by slowing growth or raising prices.

Is the American middle class really as beleaguered as it appears to think? That's debatable, at least. The stagnation of real incomes—that much-cited statistic—seems belied by a steadily improving quality of life. Capturing improvements in the range and quality of products, so that meaningful comparisons of incomes can be made over time, is a difficult statistical problem, and the statistics must be taken with a grain of salt. Who really believes that ordinary Americans are barely any better off in material terms than they were in the early 1970s? There were no cell phones back then, no video games; few homes had microwave ovens. There were no iPods, if you can imagine. Life was hard.

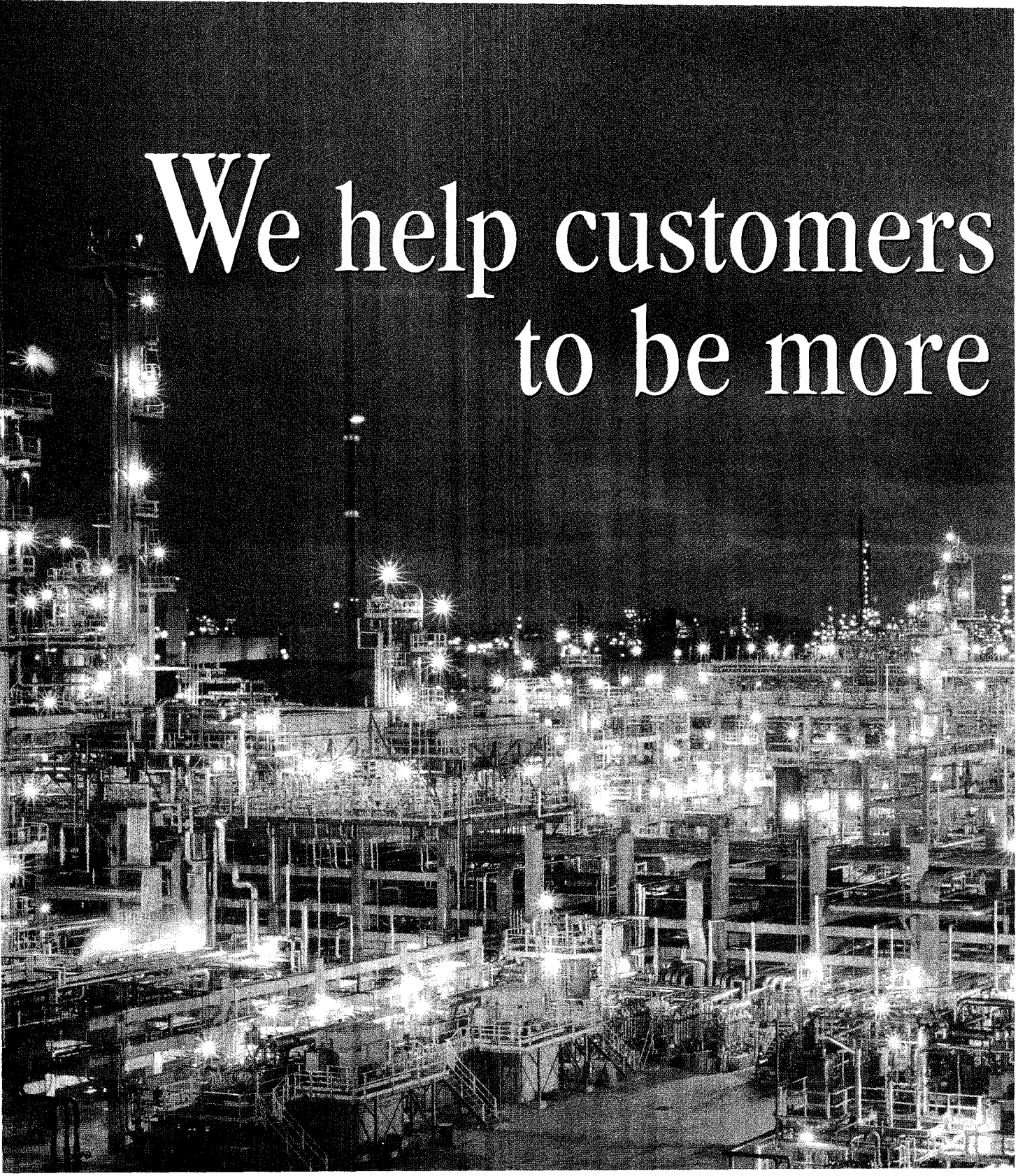
The claim that job insecurity has worsened in recent years also seems

exaggerated: Overall measures of job tenure and job displacement show no marked change. The idea that the middle class is burdened by unprecedented amounts of debt—that people are having to borrow to make ends meet—is overstated. Most personal debt is mortgage debt, generously subsidized by taxpayers, and backed (for the moment, at least) by highly appreciated holdings of property. Delinquency is rising, especially for “sub-prime” borrowers (those with weak credit histories), but the proportion of households getting behind in their debts is still very small. You may be surprised to know that more than 40 percent of middle-income households carry no credit-card debt at all.

America's middle class does, however, have some tough choices to make. The public retirement-savings system is broken and will require a lot of taxpayers' money—or extra years of work before retirement, or both—to fix. Large parts of the public-school system are failing, and the cost of a college education keeps rising faster than incomes. The country's health-care system is unsustainable in three ways: Demographic pressures are rapidly making Medicare unaffordable; per-patient costs are rising out of control; and companies are using improving technology (the ability to predict who is going to fall ill with what) to declare uninsurable some of the people who are likely to need health insurance the most. These are real issues. The middle class has grounds for anxiety, all right.

But addressing these challenges is not something that can be done at others' expense. That is the drawback of having a middle class that includes nearly everyone. Clawing back the plutocrats' tax windfall of the past few years is fine, and it will feel good, but it won't come close to paying for solutions to those problems. If America's broad middle class is going to have to pay—and it is—hard questions will follow about how to share the burden between the struggling middle, the comfortable middle, and the luxurious middle. The middle will need to be unpacked a little, and the politics might get messy. ▀

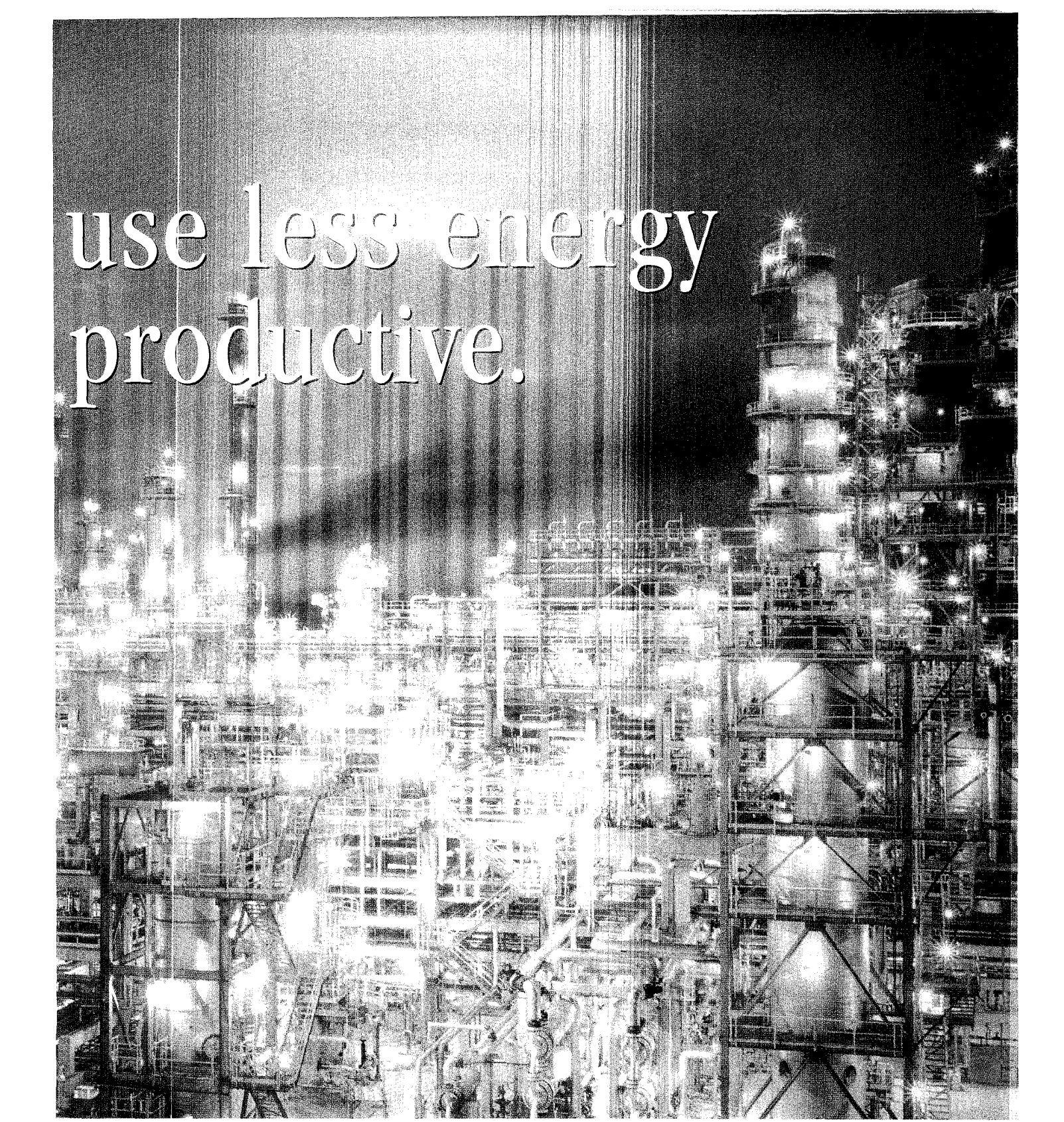
Clive Crook is an Atlantic senior editor.



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POST MORTEM

Denny Doherty (1940–2007)

The Other Papa

BY MARK STEYN

As the old line goes, if you can remember the '60s, you weren't there. Denny Doherty could remember them better than most, anecdote after anecdote—sharing spliffs with Lennon and McCartney at his pad in London, shooting the breeze with Dylan when he swung by the coffeehouse in the Village with another quatrain for "Blowin' in the Wind," neglecting to turn up at Sharon Tate's party one summer night in 1969 ... Those boomer rock guys not technically dead are mostly so zonked that, showbiz reminiscence-wise, they might as well be. But Doherty brought an old-fashioned Friars Club polish to rock-and-roll anecdotage.

If he wasn't there, he at least gave a plausible impression that he'd been nearby for pretty much every seminal event in the decade. At dawn, the morning after the night before, John and Paul went back to the day job, off to Abbey Road to continue working on an LP about someone called Sergeant Pepper; Denny headed back to the party.

It was the Summer of Love. Free love, of course, but the sex came at quite a price. Denny bought Mary Astor's old house in Laurel Canyon and opened his doors. Everyone who was anyone dropped in to say hello, and a lot of people who weren't anyone at all dropped in and never dropped out. When he needed a break from the party, Denny'd have to buy the spongers and hangers-on tickets to Europe to get them to leave. But what did he care? It was one unending roundelay of sex and drugs and light vocal harmonizing with the Mamas and the Papas. As one interviewer wrote:

Before they hit the big time, the group dropped acid, smoked dope, and drank. After they hit the big

time, the group dropped acid, smoked dope, and drank.

In between came a handful of singles that evoke a pop-culture moment with absolute precision: "California Dreamin'," "Monday, Monday," "Creeque Alley," "Dedicated to the One I Love," er ... well, OK, maybe not a handful. But they've held up better across four decades than most of the other stuff in the hit parade back then. And to achieve that pure and translucent and cleanly harmonized a sound on that much hash, heroin, LSD, mescaline, and Black Beauties is quite an achievement.

They were a quartet: two Mamas, two Papas. On the distaff side, Michelle Phillips was the hot babe—seriously hot, in a way distressingly few rock chicks are in the cold light of day when the drugs have worn off. Cass Elliot was the fat girl: She sounded great and, like Sammy Davis Jr. in the Rat Pack, she made them look more interesting.

John Phillips was the leader man: He'd married Michelle when she was still in her teens, and he wrote the songs, including that fey anthem of the era: "If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair," which remains excellent advice. He had a knack for deploying the usual hippie self-absorption in appealingly vacuous ways: "All across the nation, there's a strange vibration / There's a whole generation with a new explanation."

That left Denny, the other Papa. He sang lead, and he had one of the most gorgeous tenors of the rock-and-roll era. But you got the impression he was mostly just along for the ride. There was a plastic doll of him for sale in the '60s, but today Mama Cass is the one valued by collectors. The Denny doll is

completely lifelike: It stands there glassy-eyed, saying nothing, just like Denny late in the evening at the nonstop party at Mary Astor's house.

Doherty also turns up in a novel, but it's one by Richard Ford—*A Multitude of Sins*—during a conversation on "all the famous Canadians you'd never guess were Canadians":

"Name one."

Madeleine glanced at him condescendingly. "Denny Doherty, of the Mamas and the Papas. He's from Halifax."

It's an oddly unconvincing scene, even by the standards of the "Dead or Canadian?" parlor game. But Doherty was indeed from Halifax, Nova Scotia: a dockyard worker's son who quit school in ninth grade. With a couple of pals, he formed a group and, like all the other aspiring folkies, started doing Kingston Trio numbers. They called themselves the Halifax Three.

How Denny got from there to California and the groupies and the private jet is a tale recounted in the Mamas and the Papas' autobiographical hit, "Creeque Alley":

"John and Mitchie were gettin' kinda itchy just to leave the folk music behind." (That is, John and Michelle Phillips had had their fill of doing the Kingston Trio stuff, too.)

"Zal and Denny workin' for a penny, tryin' to get a fish on the line." (Zal Yanovsky was the Halifax Three's, er, fourth member, which is the kind of careless overmanning that does, indeed, capture the authentic spirit of the Nova Scotian economy.)

Aside from a passing reference to Denny giving Cass "love bumps," "Creeque

Alley" was silent on the group's sexual dynamics. John was married to Michelle, who began an affair with Denny. But hey, it's showbiz, and they got a song out of that, too: "I Saw Her Again." It was, however, a double betrayal: Cass had been sweet on Denny from the beginning, but he "couldn't deal with the weight" and steered clear. "You can have any man in the world," she told Michelle. "Why take the one man I love?" Unlike the four-man Halifax Three, in this combo three was a company, four a crowd. "It's easy to find boyfriends," said Cass. "I buy them a motorcycle, a leather suit, and put them in acting school." Sometimes the price tag was lower. "There were a couple of good-looking guys that were *schtupping* Cass," recalled Denny Bruce, drummer with the Mothers (no relation to the Mamas). "They were basically there for her drugs."

California *schtuppin'* on such a winter's day. Michelle had a one-night stand with Roman Polanski, and for a while the director figured it was John Phillips who'd murdered Sharon Tate to get even. He threatened John with a meat cleaver and checked his car for blood and hair samples. John took it in stride. He was "romantically linked" (if that's the expression) with everyone from Mia Farrow to Princess Margaret. Denny did OK in his wake: One would be only mildly surprised to hear he'd got stuck with the queen while stringing along on a double date. But there were lots of noncelebrity chicks as well. John got a song out of that, too: "Twelve-Thirty (Young Girls Are Coming to the Canyon)." "They'd wander the hills calling out names," Doherty remembered. "We have a cake for you, Denny!"

But eventually someone leaves your cake out in the rain, and you'll never

find that recipe again: Denny and John discovered Michelle was having an affair with Gene from the Byrds and decided that was beyond the pale. "They sent me a very rude little letter, telling me my services would no longer be needed," she said. "I was completely isolated. I had been fired by my husband, my lover, and my best friend. And my attorney."

Back in Halifax, Denny's dad had never been impressed by the California

Engine as the Halifax Three was to the Kingston Trio. It was filmed in his old school. "People say to me, 'Your life is so exciting ...' Yeah, I'm back in my grade-five classroom playing with tub toys."

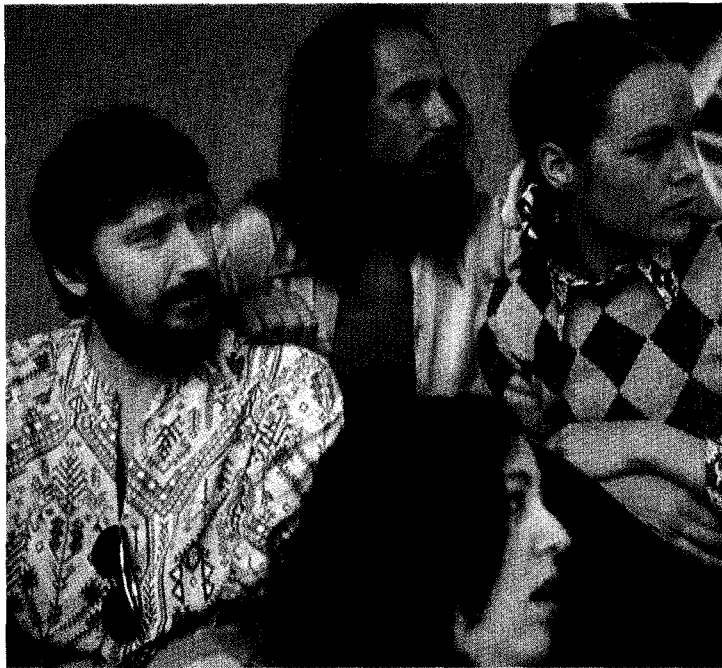
There was one bit of unfinished business. As the Mamas and the Papas were falling apart, Cass proposed to Denny. He turned her down. On July 29, 1974, in London, after a two-week run at the Palladium, she died of a heart attack. She was

the talent in the group, and posterity recalls her as a ham-sandwich joke. Denny thought that was wrong. In the 1990s, he wrote a revue about the Mamas and the Papas, the usual feeble opportunist jukebox retrospective, but distinguished by his tenderness for the fat girl he let get away. He took the show's title not from one of the group's hits but from Mama Cass's first big smash, the old standard "Dream a Little Dream of Me." Onstage, the emotional peak of the evening came when he sang the song to her: "Stars fading but I linger on, dear / Still craving your kiss."

Not the woozy flower-power narcissism of John Phillips but a straightforward heartfelt sentiment by Gus Kahn, the old-time Tin Pan Alleyman who wrote "It Had to Be You" and "Makin' Whoopee." Denny and Cass never did make whoopee, but in his final years, widowed, weathered, balding, and paunchy, he'd concede that turning her down was the great mistake of his life.

The '60s got old so fast. Cass, Denny, and John are all dead, and so are Zal and a bunch of the other supporting players. All the leaves are brown, and the sky is gray, and the California dream fades to a distant blur. ▀

Mark Steyn is a columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and other publications. He is the author of *America Alone* (2006).



A TENSE FAMILY: Denny Doherty (at left) and his fellow Mamas and Papa—John Phillips, Michelle Phillips, and Cass Elliot

dreamin'. "Get yourself a trade," he told his son, when junior pointed out how well he was doing in the Billboard Top 40. "Something you can put in your arse pocket." When the group fell apart in 1968, Denny discovered his arse pocket was empty. The money had gone. He was married to a gal from the chorus of his flop New York theater debut and living in a two-room dump in Hell's Kitchen when he remembered he still owned a house in Nova Scotia. So he came home.

"There are no second acts in American lives," said Scott Fitzgerald, but there are if you're willing to move to Canada: Back north, Denny Doherty ended his working days as the beloved harbormaster on the children's TV show *Theodore Tugboat*, which is to *Thomas the Tank*

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150 YEARS OF THE ATLANTIC

This is the 14th in a series of archival excerpts in honor of the magazine's 150th anniversary.

For the full text of these articles, visit www.theatlantic.com/ideastour.



The Military

THE STAFF OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

March 1878

BY R. WILLIAMS,
COLONEL U.S.A.

A little more than a decade after the Civil War ended, a U.S. Army colonel sharply criticized the military's personnel structure—warning that it was fostering apathy rather than bravery or a commitment to excellence.

Our army presents the only known example of a business or profession, either public or private, in which incompetency and want of zeal bring the same substantial rewards as energy, capacity, and active attention to duty. Such a system of promotion is in violation of all the rules of common sense by which men are governed, as well as of those by which they are incited to strive for superior excellence, and the condition of our army at the outbreak of the rebellion affords an excellent example of its inevitable result. At that time the superior grades of the army were filled by old men, who, having outlived all above them, had been regularly promoted, in accordance with this system, to the positions which they occupied, regardless of the well-known fact that in the majority of instances they were unfitted, both by age and infirmity, to perform any military duty whatever. The spectacle was so pitiable, and the lesson it taught so apparent, that it might be supposed the government would have profited by such

crushing experience, and been led by it to the adoption of wiser measures. Such, however, was not the case ... [This system] is deadening to all effort at improvement or professional skill, and suggests the natural conclusion: that, as superior rank is obtained only by longevity, each should strive to avoid all exposure, hardships, or dangers by which health may be impaired or life risked.

Vol. 41, No. 245, pp. 376–384

YOU'RE IN THE ARMY—AGAIN

January 1949

BY EDGAR L. JONES

In the late 1940s, as the government reinstituted the peacetime draft, Atlantic correspondent Edgar L. Jones took issue with the excessive and misleading pains the Army seemed to be taking to reassure concerned mothers.

Almost simultaneous with the Army's announcement that the peacetime draft would shift into high with the induction of 20,000 trainees in January was the companion announcement by General Jacob L. Devers, chief of Army Ground Forces, that every youth drafted into the Army "will be treated as a human being, never a raw recruit." Speaking before the American War Mothers, General Devers outlined a serviceman's utopia in which draftees would be sent to posts "as near home as possible," would be given a

"chance to ask questions," and would be assigned uniforms "individually fitted."

As if that were not enough to indicate a new way of Army life, General Devers assured the mothers that training instructors, no longer to be thought of as tough drill sergeants, would try "to establish a personal relationship with the incoming recruit," and that all trainees would be "told the reason for everything they do that is new to them." The Army's principal authority on combat training then went on to say that the Army would insist that each trainee write home; that each would be interviewed by his company commander and chaplain, both of whom, in turn, would write personal letters to his mother; and that (the real clincher) "neither he nor his instructors will use profanity."

The good General's attempts to lighten the hearts of American mothers had a derisive reception among World War II veterans—among those, at least, who let their reactions be known to newspapermen ...

The veterans have not forgotten that much the same picture of humanized service in a "civilian" Army was projected for their benefit at the start of the 1940 draft. At that time, too, military leaders were busily promoting the idea that the Army was not so much a militarized regime as a glorified trade school in which young men not only equipped themselves for steady peacetime work but also acquired all the wholesome personal qualities that, by implication, their parents, schools, and churches had failed to nurture.

The GI of 1940–1945 was not treated, to borrow another fine phrase from General Devers, as “a person of individual dignity and feelings.” And there will be no sadder Sad Sack than the draftee of 1949 who expects to have a tender regard shown for his individuality.

Vol. 183, No. 1, pp. 31–34

THE DRAFT: WHY THE ARMY NEEDS IT

April 1980

BY JAMES WEBB

When President Jimmy Carter proposed reinstating the draft registration requirement in response to the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan, decorated Vietnam combat veteran James Webb said that registration was not enough: Nothing short of reinstituting the draft, he argued, could save the Army. (In 2006, Webb was elected to the U.S. Senate.)

The volunteer Army is an unmitigated disaster ...

Because there is no draft, volunteer Army soldiers are wheedled and cajoled by recruiters. This sort of seduction, which has become necessary in the face of recruiting shortfalls that have increased every year, creates an attitude in both the enlistee and the military itself which is destructive to discipline and the traditional notions of service ...

The military is not a job, any more than paying taxes is a job ... We should all be willing to give a portion of our lives in order to assure that our freedoms will not disappear ...

It is fundamentally wrong—and cowardly—in a democratic society to claim that those who stand between us and a potential enemy should be risking their lives merely because they are “following the marketplace,” and the military is their “best deal.” The result of such logic is today’s volunteer Army, a collection of men and women who have been economically conscripted to do society’s

dirty work, as surely as if there were the most inequitable draft imaginable.

Our greatest need is ... to make our military once again a fighting force rather than a social lab, and to stop being afraid to ask the men of Harvard to stand alongside the men of Harlem, same uniform, same obligations, same country.

Vol. 245, No. 4, pp. 34–44

SUCCESS STORY: BLACKS IN THE MILITARY

May 1986

BY CHARLES C. MOSKOS

In 1986, military sociologist Charles Moskos hailed the U.S. armed forces as one of the country’s most successful examples of racial integration.

The record of the U.S. military in race relations is one that deserves recognition ... Blacks occupy more management positions in the military than they do in business, education, journalism, government, or any other significant sector of American society ...

Observation of any dining facility ... reveals little informal racial separation. A rule of thumb is that the more military the environment, the more effective the integration. Interracial comity is stronger in the field than in the garrison, stronger on duty than off, and stronger on post than in the world beyond the base ...

I have asked many Army blacks what it was that made a military career attractive as an avenue of mobility. For one thing, many of them have said, there were enough blacks in the Army to promise a certain degree of social comfort and professional support. For another, there were enough non-black and non-poor people to prevent the Army from being thought of as a “black” institution or a haven for society’s underclass. The Army, in short, delivered the uplift but not the stigma of a government social program. If the Army has succeeded as a remedial

organization for many youths with otherwise dead-end prospects, it may be precisely because the Army does not admit to being a remedial organization at all.

Vol. 257, No. 5, pp. 64–72

FIVE DAYS IN FALLUJAH

July/August 2004

BY ROBERT D. KAPLAN

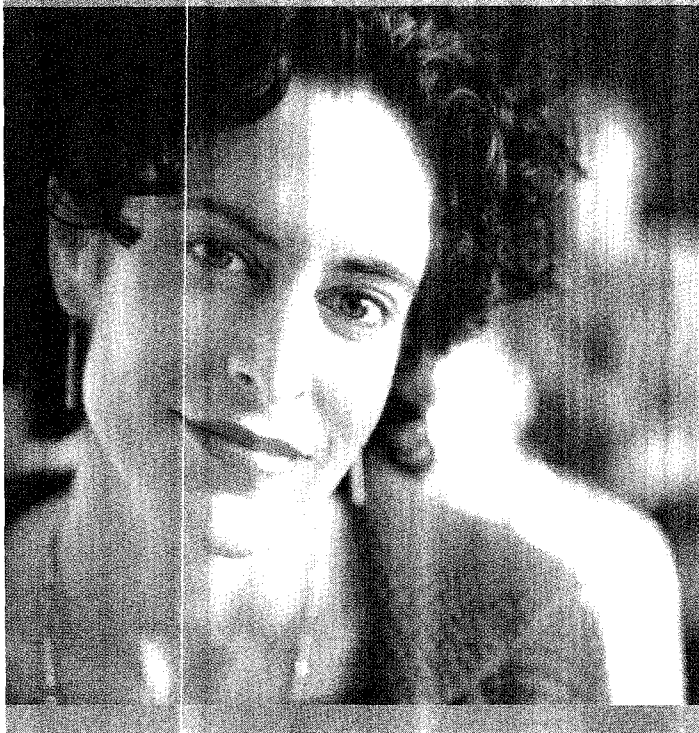
While embedded with the Marines in Iraq, Atlantic correspondent Robert D. Kaplan found himself in the midst of gunfire. Marines, he abruptly realized, are very different from the rest of us.

I had just poured water into the heating filter for a Captain Country Chicken MRE, and was preparing to remove some layers of clothing beneath my flak vest ... when RPG and small-arms fire rattled the scrap iron that formed the roof of the filthy garage headquarters ...

Smith did not have to order his Marines straight into the direction of the fire; it was a collective impulse—a phenomenon I would see again and again over the coming days. The idea that Marines are trained to break down doors, to seize beachheads and other territory, was an abstraction until I was there to experience it. Running into fire rather than seeking cover from it goes counter to every human survival instinct—trust me. I was sweating as much from fear as from the layers of clothing I still had on from the night before, to the degree that it felt as if pure salt were running into my eyes from my forehead. As the weeks had rolled on, and I had gotten to know the [regiment] as the individuals they were, I had started deluding myself that they weren’t much different from me. They had soft spots, they got sick, they complained. But in one flash, as we charged across [the road] amid whistling incoming shots, I realized that they were not like me; they were Marines.

Vol. 294, No. 1, pp. 116–126

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Inside the Bush administration's steroids scandal

BY JOHN FREEMAN GILL

Illustrations by Steve Brodner

The Shots Heard 'Round the World

An open letter from Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig:

With Opening Day upon us and Hank Aaron's hallowed career home-run record likely to come under controversial assault this season, it is with some urgency that I share with you disturbing new revelations about the conduct of several current and former Bush administration heavy hitters.

In recent weeks, baseball's ongoing investigation, led by former Washington Senators left fielder George Mitchell, has turned up damaging new evidence.

Put simply, it has become clear that when key players in the Bush administration appeared in 2005 before the reform committee of Major League Baseball and declared under oath that they had never knowingly used steroids while conducting foreign policy, they were not being truthful with the American public. Formerly classified urine

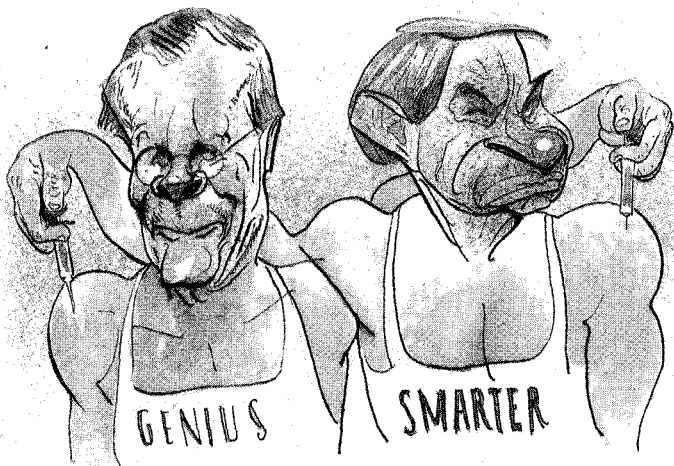
samples conclusively confirm the charges—first leveled in former Oakland A's star Jose Canseco's book, *Juiced*—that Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz regularly injected each other in the buttocks with anabolic steroids during the 2001 and 2002 seasons.

In those years, even while many astute critics noted the two men's freakish increase in head size and sense of invincibility, we in Major League Baseball were slow to recognize the severity of the problem, despite the administration's dramatic surge in both home runs and invasions of far-off lands.

But coded doping calendars recently obtained by Mr. Mitchell show that the Bush team's clubhouse watercoolers have for years been spiked with an astonishing array of controlled substances, including testosterone decanoate and the inordinately powerful steroid trenbolone—apparently obtained from President Bush's Texas ranch—that is intended to improve the muscle quality of beef cattle.

Indeed, the culture of Cabinet-level testosterone supplementation is now so pervasive that Mr. Bush is said to think nothing of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's habit of crushing beer cans against her forehead and belching triumphantly during state dinners.

Further revelations have emerged in leaked grand-jury testimony regarding possible perjury by former vice-presidential chief of staff and personal trainer I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby Jr. The perjury case



arose from Mr. Libby's 2003 testimony before a grand jury probing the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative (BALCO), a nutritional-supplement company since exposed as the steroid supplier to several top athletes and neoconservative thinkers. Mr. Libby testified that he was unaware that two gooey substances he had dutifully slathered on Vice President Dick Cheney's pate (and which presidential strength coach Karl Rove simultaneously smeared inside Mr. Bush's favorite Stetson) were the undetectable designer steroids known as "the cream" and "the clear." To his knowledge, Mr. Libby testified, the two substances were Kaopectate and flaxseed oil.

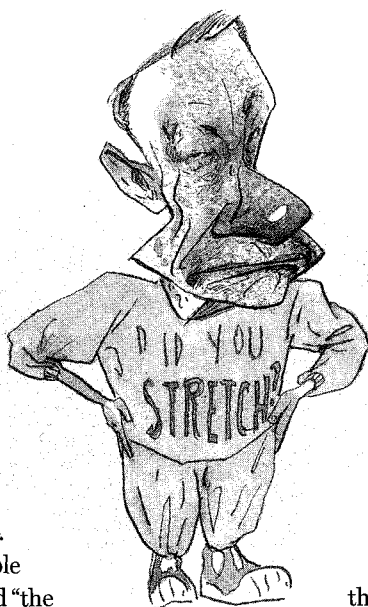
But as early as fall 2001, after the American military's early success in crushing both the Taliban and the single-season home-run record, members of the administration's inner circle began to worry that both Mr. Bush and Mr. Cheney were becoming prone to the sort of spasmodic aggressiveness common among steroid abusers.

While Mr. Bush began brandishing such six-shooter turns of phrase as "You're either with us or agin' us" and "Bring 'em on," Mr. Cheney helped muscle the country into war with Iraq by jabbering ominously about nonexistent links

between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. Then, during a hunting outing and picnic last year with his workout partner, 78-year-old Austin lawyer Harry Whittington, Mr. Cheney flew into a full-blown 'roid rage and sprayed the unsuspecting codger in the face with birdshot, reportedly after learning that Mr. Whittington had gotten a good deal more Marshmallow Fluff on his Fluffernutter sandwich than had the vice president.

For Mr. Bush's part, the superabundance of testosterone coursing through his system became embarrassingly apparent during last summer's G8 All-Star Game, when the president executed an ill-advised squeeze play on the shoulders of German slugger Angela Merkel, apparently while attempting to steal second base.

Now, in the wake of the "thumpin'" his team sustained in last season's Fall Classic, the president appears desperate to revisit the heady days when his initial power surge inspired shock and awe in opposing squads. Oblivious to the way his protracted steroid use has ravaged the body



politic, Mr. Bush has brushed aside the American fans' wish that he make a graceful exit from both Iraq and the home-run chase; instead, he has declared his intention to bulk up still further and stay in the game. Never one to speak softly, the president now seems determined to demonstrate that he can still swing a big stick.

The American fans are a forgiving people. Recent history has shown that they are more than willing to shrug off a little juiced rhetoric, when the only

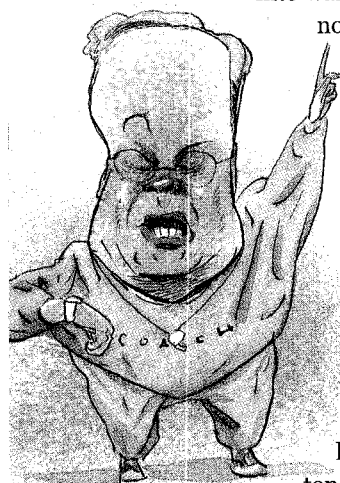
consequences are such trifles as the shredding of our leaders' credibility and the upending of the precarious stability of the Middle East. But when the sanctity of the national pastime's statistics is violated, our very way of life is threatened.

As commissioner of baseball, I can therefore no longer sit idly by while the president, his knees and popularity badly damaged by years of illicit steroid use, limps past the four-year anniversary of the Iraq invasion and toward Hank Aaron's career home-run mark, the most cherished record in professional sports. Effective today, I am consequently instituting the following reforms:

Retroactive to the 2001 season, every international initiative and batting statistic generated by the Bush administration shall be accompanied in the official Major League history by an asterisk, and the 2001 to 2007 seasons will henceforth be known as the Steroid Era of American foreign policy.

My purpose in taking these actions is to inject some perspective into the record book. Should the Bush team hammer a long ball this season that smashes both the home-run mark at home and the balance of power abroad, let fans everywhere note the unnatural origin of this latest shot heard 'round the world. ▀

John Freeman Gill writes regularly for *The New York Times*.



Climate change in the next century (and beyond) could be enormously disruptive, spreading disease and sparking wars. It could also be a windfall for some people, businesses, and nations. A guide to how we all might get along in a warming world

BY GREGG EASTERBROOK

GLOBAL WARMING:

6 NUNAVUT—as final victim of manifest destiny

1 BUFFALO—as summer vacation paradise of the stars

4 WASHINGTON, D.C.—as city of eternal spring

14 PATAGONIA—damming and conversion to hydropower of

Who Loses—and Who Wins?

Coastal cities inundated, farming regions parched, ocean currents disrupted, tropical diseases spreading, glaciers melting—an artificial greenhouse effect could generate countless tribulations. ¶ If Earth's climate changes meaningfully—and the National Academy of Sciences, previously skeptical, said in 2005 that signs of climate »

11 NORTH POLE SEAS—rush to establish oil-drilling rights in

2 SIBERIA—rich minerals of

9 EUROPE—frigid, inhospitable future of

3 MOSCOW—as home to pro-warming plotters

5 AFGHANISTAN—as greener pasture for overheated Pakistanis

12 CHINA—dehydration of

13 INDIA—as victim of worsening monsoons

8 HONG KONG—abandonment of

7 SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA—as contrarian land-buying opportunity

10 SINGAPORE—as economic victim of new arctic shipping route

MAPPING THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

An index of some of the blessings, curses, and conflicts that warming might create

(Each numeric label refers to a corresponding discussion in the essay.)

change have become significant—there could be broad-based disruption of the global economy unparalleled by any event other than World War II.

Economic change means winners as well as losers. Huge sums will be made and lost if the global climate changes. Everyone wonders what warming might do to the environment—but what might it do to the global distribution of money and power?

Whether mainly natural or mainly artificial, climate change could bring different regions of the world tremendous benefits as well as drastic problems. The world had been mostly warming for thousands of years before the industrial era began, and that warming has been indisputably favorable to the spread of civilization. The trouble is that the world's economic geography is today organized according to a climate that has largely prevailed since the Middle Ages—runaway

climate change would force big changes in the physical ordering of society. In the past, small climate changes have had substantial impact on agriculture, trade routes, and the types of products and commodities that sell. Larger climate shifts have catalyzed the rise and fall of whole societies. The Mayan Empire, for instance, did not disappear “mysteriously”; it likely fell into decline owing to decades of drought that ruined its agricultural base and deprived its cities of drinking water. On the other side of the coin, Europe's Medieval Warm Period, which lasted from around 1000 to 1400, was essential to the rise of Spain, France, and England: Those clement centuries allowed the expansion of farm production, population, cities, and universities, which in turn set the stage for the Industrial Revolution. Unless greenhouse-effect theory is completely wrong—and science increasingly supports the idea that it is right—21st-century

27,000,000°F

// 73% Hydrogen

// 25% Helium

// 0.3% Carbon

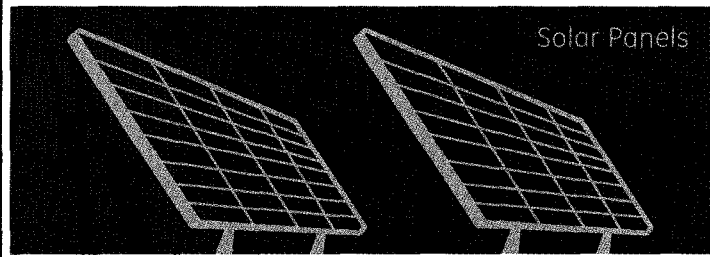
// 1% Oxygen

93,000,000 miles to Earth

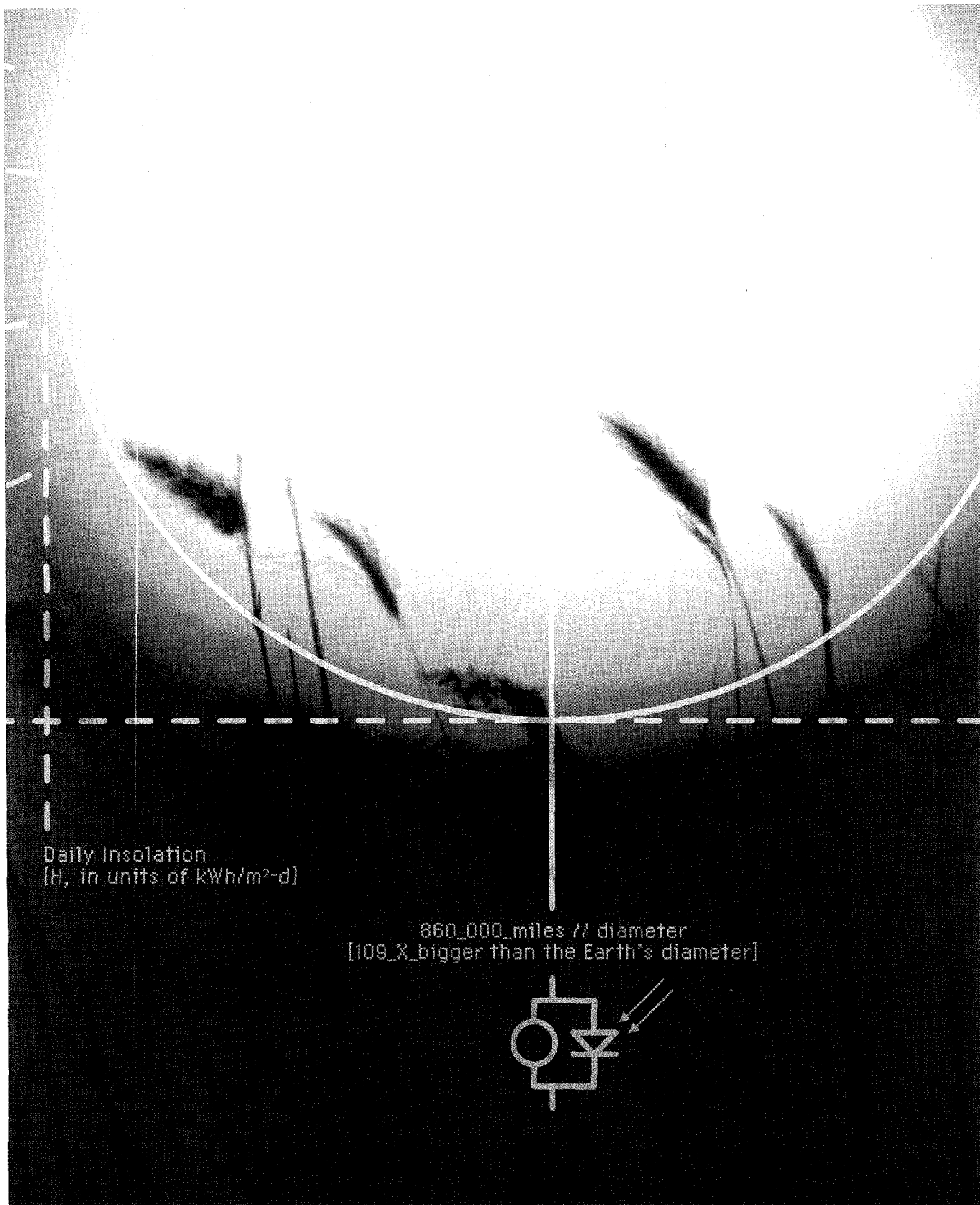
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climate change means that sweeping social and economic changes are in the works.

To date the greenhouse-effect debate has been largely carried out in abstractions—arguments about the distant past (what *do* those 100,000-year-old ice cores in Greenland really tell us about ancient temperatures, anyway?) coupled to computer-model conjecture regarding the 22nd century, with the occasional Hollywood disaster movie thrown in. Soon, both abstraction and postapocalyptic fantasy could be pushed aside by the economic and political realities of a warming world. If the global climate continues changing, many people and nations will find themselves in possession of land and resources of rising value, while others will suffer dire losses—and these winners and losers could start appearing faster than you might imagine. Add artificially triggered climate change to the volatility already initiated by globalization, and the next few decades may see previously unthinkable levels of economic upheaval, in which fortunes are won and lost based as much on the physical climate as on the business climate.

It may sound odd to ask of global warming, What's in it for me? But the question is neither crass nor tongue-in-cheek. The ways in which climate change could skew the world's distribution of wealth should help us appreciate just how profoundly an artificial greenhouse effect might shake our lives. Moreover, some of the lasting effects of climate change are likely to come not so much from the warming itself but from how we react to it: If the world warms appreciably, men and women will not sit by idly, eating bonbons and reading weather reports; there will be instead what economists call "adaptive response," most likely a great deal of it. Some aspects of this response may inflame tensions between those who are winning and those who are losing. How people, the global economy, and the international power structure adapt to climate change may influence how we live for generations. If the world warms, who will win? Who will lose? And what's in it for you?

LAND

Real estate might be expected to appreciate steadily in value during the 21st century, given that both the global population and global prosperity are rising. The supply of land is fixed, and if there's a fixed supply of something but a growing demand, appreciation should be automatic. That's unless climate change increases the supply of land by warming currently frosty areas while throwing the amount of *desirable* land into tremendous flux. My hometown of Buffalo, New York, for example, is today so *déclassé* that some of its stately Beaux-Arts homes, built during the Gilded Age and overlooking a park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, sell for about the price of one-bedroom condos in Boston or San Francisco. If a warming world makes the area less cold and snowy, Buffalo might become one of the country's desirable addresses.¹

At the same time, Arizona and Nevada, blazing growth markets today, might become unbearably hot and see their real-estate markets crash. If the oceans rise, Florida's rapid growth could be, well, swamped by an increase in its perilously high groundwater table. Houston could decline, made insufferable by worsened summertime humidity, while the splendid, rustic Laurentide Mountains region north of Montreal, if warmed up a bit, might transmogrify into the new Poconos.

These are just a few of many possible examples. Climate change could upset the applecart of real-estate values all over the world, with low-latitude properties tanking while high latitudes become the Sun Belt of the mid-21st century.

Local changes in housing demand are only small beer. To consider the big picture, examine a Mercator projection of our planet, and observe how the Earth's landmasses spread from the equator to the poles. Assume global warming is reasonably uniform. (Some computer models suggest that warming will vary widely by region; for the purposes of this article, suffice it to say that all predictions regarding an artificial greenhouse effect are extremely uncertain.) The equatorial and low-latitude areas of the world presumably will become hotter and less desirable as places of habitation, plus less valuable in economic terms; with a few exceptions, these areas are home to developing nations where living standards are already low.

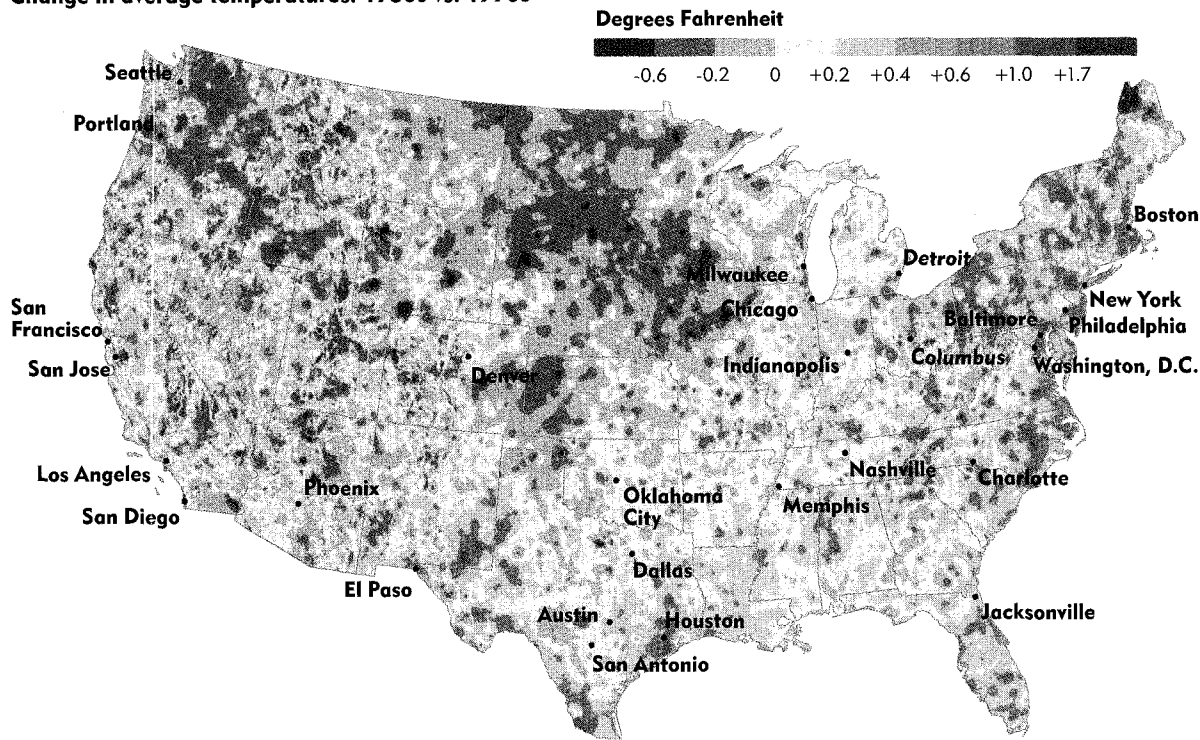
So where is the high-latitude landmass that might grow more valuable in a warming world? By accident of geography, except for Antarctica nearly all such land is in the Northern Hemisphere, whose continents are broad west-to-east. Only a relatively small portion of South America, which narrows as one travels south, is high latitude, and none of Africa or Australia is. (Cape Town is roughly the same distance from the equator as Cape Hatteras; Melbourne is about the same distance from the equator as Manhattan.) More specifically, nearly all the added land-value benefits of a warming world might accrue to Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Russia, and Scandinavia.

This raises the possibility that an artificial greenhouse effect could harm nations that are already hard pressed and benefit nations that are already affluent. If Alaska turned temperate, it would drive conservationists to distraction, but it would also open for development an area more than twice the size of Texas. Rising world temperatures might throw Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and other low-latitude nations into generations of misery, while causing Canada, Greenland, and Scandinavia to experience a rip-roarin' economic boom. Many Greenlanders are already cheering the retreat of glaciers, since this melting stands to make their vast island far more valuable. Last July, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that the growing season in the portion of Greenland open to cultivation is already two weeks longer than it was in the 1970s.

FEELING A DIFFERENCE

The East Coast and Northwest were generally warmer during the 1990s than in the decade before, while the northern Great Plains have cooled. In some areas, higher elevations show warming, but in other areas—particularly in some states in the Southwest—higher elevations show cooling.

Change in average temperatures: 1980s vs. 1990s



And Russia! For generations poets have bemoaned this realm as cursed by enormous, foreboding, harsh Siberia. What if the region in question were instead enormous, temperate, inviting Siberia? Climate change could place Russia in possession of the largest new region of pristine, exploitable land since the sailing ships of Europe first spied the shores of what would be called North America. The snows of Siberia cover soils that have never been depleted by controlled agriculture. What's more, beneath Siberia's snow may lie geologic formations that hold vast deposits of fossil fuels, as well as mineral resources.² When considering ratification of the Kyoto Protocol to regulate greenhouse gases, the Moscow government dragged its feet, though the treaty was worded to offer the Russians extensive favors. Why might this have happened? Perhaps because Russia might be much better off in a warming world: Warming's benefits to Russia could exceed those to all other nations combined.³

Of course, it could be argued that politicians seldom give much thought—one way or the other—to actions whose value will become clear only after they leave office, so perhaps Moscow does not have a grand strategy to warm the world for its own good. But a warmer world may be much to Russia's liking, whether it comes by strategy or accident. And how long until high-latitude nations realize global warming might be in their interests? In

recent years, Canada has increased its greenhouse-gas output more rapidly than most other rich countries. Maybe this is a result of prosperity and oil-field development—or maybe those wily Canadians have a master plan for their huge expanse of currently uninhabitable land.

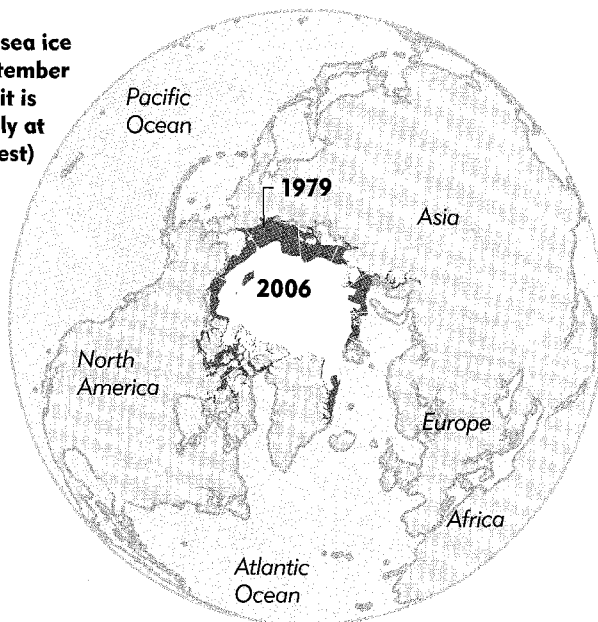
Global warming might do more for the North, however, than just opening up new land. Temperatures are rising on average, but *when* are they rising? Daytime? Nighttime? Winter? Summer? One fear about artificially triggered climate change has been that global warming would lead to scorching summer-afternoon highs, which would kill crops and brown out the electric power grid. Instead, so far a good share of the warming—especially in North America—has come in the form of nighttime and winter lows that are less low. Higher lows reduce the harshness of winter in northern climes and moderate the demand for energy. And fewer freezes allow extended growing seasons, boosting farm production. In North America, spring comes ever earlier—in recent years, trees have flowered in Washington, D.C., almost a week earlier on average than a generation ago.⁴ People may find this creepy, but earlier springs and milder winters can have economic value to agriculture—and lest we forget, all modern societies, including the United States, are grounded in agriculture.

If a primary impact of an artificially warmed world is to make land in Canada, Greenland, Russia, Scandinavia,

A NORTHWEST PASSAGE?

Arctic sea ice has shrunk measurably in recent years, suggesting a long-term melting trend. Commercial shipping through previously icebound seas may be viable later this century.

Arctic sea ice in September (when it is typically at its lowest)



and the United States more valuable, this could have three powerful effects on the 21st-century global situation.

First, historically privileged northern societies might not decline geopolitically, as many commentators have predicted. Indeed, the great age of northern power may lie ahead, if Earth's very climate is on the verge of conferring boons to that part of the world. Should it turn out that headlong fossil-fuel combustion by northern nations has set in motion climate change that strengthens the relative world position of those same nations, future essayists will have a field day. But the prospect is serious. By the middle of the 21st century, a new global balance of power may emerge in which Russia and America are once again the world's paired superpowers—only this time during a Warming War instead of a Cold War.

Second, if northern societies find that climate change makes them more wealthy, the quest for world equity could be dealt a huge setback. Despite the popular misconception, globalized economics have been a positive force for increased equity. As the Indian economist Surjit Bhalla has shown, the developing world produced 29 percent of the globe's income in 1950; by 2000 that share had risen to 42 percent, while the developing world's share of population rose at a slower rate. All other things being equal, we might expect continued economic globalization to distribute wealth more widely. But if climate change increases the value of northern land and resources, while leaving nations near the equator hotter and wracked by storms or droughts, all other things would not be equal.

That brings us to the third great concern: If climate change causes developing nations to falter, and social

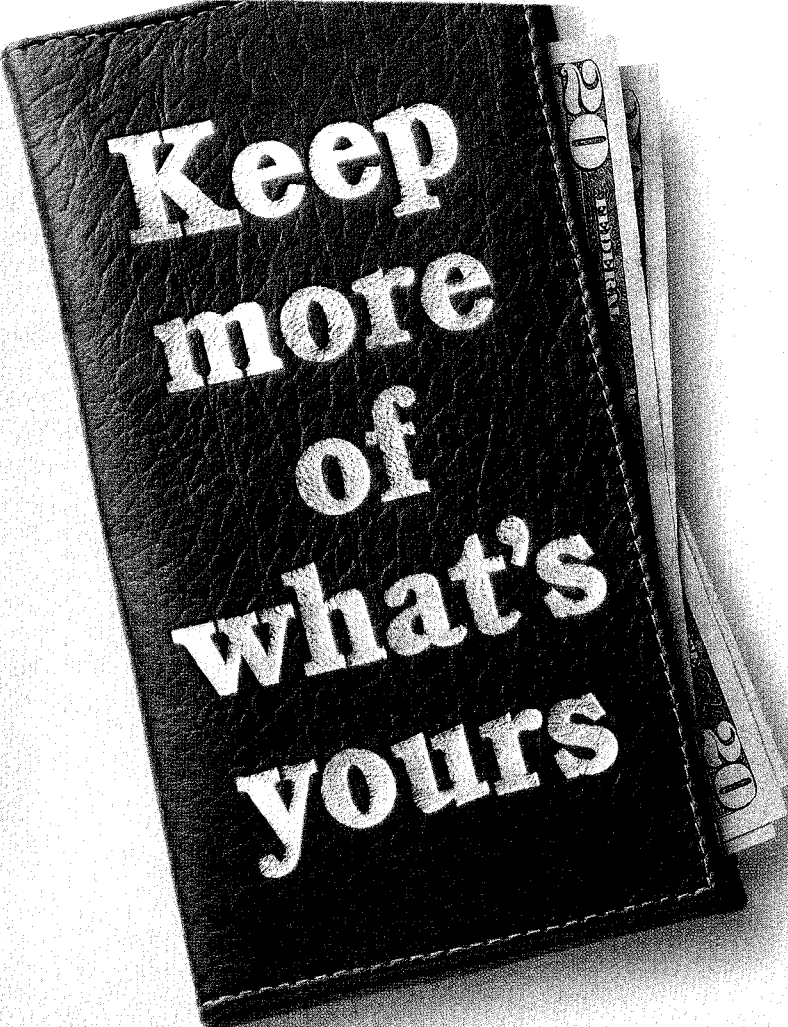
conditions within them deteriorate, many millions of jobless or hungry refugees may come to the borders of the favored North, demanding to be let in. If the very Earth itself turns against poor nations, punishing them with heat and storms, how could the United States morally deny the refugees succor?

Shifts in the relative values of places and resources have often led to war, and it is all too imaginable that climate change will cause nations to envy each other's territory. This envy is likely to run both north-south and up-down. North-south? Suppose climate change made Brazil less habitable, while bringing an agreeable mild climate to the vast and fertile Argentinean pampas to Brazil's south. São Paulo is already one of the world's largest cities. Would a desperate, overheated Brazil of the year 2037—its population exploding—hesitate to attack Argentina for cool, inviting land? Now consider the up-down prospect: the desire to leave low-lying areas for altitude. Here's an example: Since its independence, in 1947, Pakistan has kept a hand in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Today Americans view this issue through the lens of the Taliban and al-Qaeda, but from Islamabad's perspective, the goal has always been to keep Afghanistan available as a place for retreat, should Pakistan lose a war with India. What if the climate warms, rendering much of Pakistan unbearable to its citizens? (Temperatures of 100-plus degrees are already common in the Punjab.) Afghanistan's high plateaus, dry and rocky as they are, might start looking pleasingly temperate as Pakistan warms, and the Afghans might see yet another army headed their way.⁵

A warming climate could cause other landgrabs on a national scale. Today Greenland is a largely self-governing territory of Denmark that the world leaves in peace because no nation covets its shivering expanse. Should the Earth warm, Copenhagen might assert greater jurisdiction over Greenland, or stronger governments might scheme to seize this dwarf continent, which is roughly three times the size of Texas. Today Antarctica is under international administration, and this arrangement is generally accepted because the continent has no value beyond scientific research. If the world warmed for a long time—and it would likely take centuries for the Antarctic ice sheet to melt completely—international jockeying to seize or conquer Antarctica might become intense. Some geologists believe large oil deposits are under the Antarctic crust: In earlier epochs, the austral pole was densely vegetated and had conditions suitable for the formation of fossil fuels.

And though I've said to this point that Canada would stand to become more valuable in a warming world, actually, Canada and Nunavut would. For centuries, Europeans drove the indigenous peoples of what is now Canada farther and farther north. In 1993, Canada agreed to grant a degree of independence to the primarily Inuit population of Nunavut, and this large, cold region in the country's

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northeast has been mainly self-governing since 1999. The Inuit believe they are ensconced in the one place in this hemisphere that the descendants of Europe will never, ever want. This could turn out to be wrong.⁶

For investors, finding attractive land to buy and hold for a warming world is fraught with difficulties, particularly when looking abroad. If considering plots on the pampas, for example, should one negotiate with the current Argentinian owners or the future Brazilian ones? Perhaps a safer route would be the contrarian one, focused on the likelihood of falling land values in places people may leave. If strict carbon-dioxide regulations are enacted, corporations will shop for "offsets," including projects that absorb carbon dioxide from the sky. Growing trees is a potential greenhouse-gas offset, and can be done comparatively cheaply in parts of the developing world, even on land that people may stop wanting. If you jump into the greenhouse-offset business, what you might plant is *leucaena*, a rapidly growing tree species suited to the trop-

The global temperature increase of the last century—about one degree Fahrenheit—was modest and did not cause any dangerous sea-level rise. Sea-level worries turn on the possibility that there is some nonlinear aspect of the climate system, a "tipping point" that could cause the rate of global warming to accelerate markedly. One reason global warming has not happened as fast as expected appears to be that the oceans have absorbed much of the carbon dioxide emitted by human activity. Studies suggest, however, that the ability of the oceans to absorb carbon dioxide may be slowing; as the absorption rate declines, atmospheric buildup will happen faster, and climate change could speed up. At the first sign of an increase in the rate of global warming: Sell, sell, sell your coastal properties. Unload those London and Seattle waterfront holdings. Buy land and real property in Omaha or Ontario.

An artificial greenhouse effect may also alter ocean currents in unpredictable ways. Already there is some evidence that the arctic currents are changing, while the major North

The Inuit believe they are ensconced in the one place in this hemisphere that the descendants of Europe will never, ever want. This could turn out to be wrong.

ics that metabolizes carbon dioxide faster than most trees. But you'll want to own the land in order to control the sale of the credits. Consider a possible sequence of events: First, climate change makes parts of the developing world even less habitable than they are today; then, refugees flee these areas; finally, land can be snapped up at Filene's Basement prices—and used to grow *leucaena* trees.⁷

WATER

If Al Gore's movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, is to be believed, you should start selling coastal real estate now. Gore's film maintains that an artificial greenhouse effect could raise sea levels 20 feet in the near future, flooding Manhattan, San Francisco, and dozens of other cities; Micronesia would simply disappear below the waves. Gore's is the doomsday number, but the scientific consensus is worrisome enough: In 2005, the National Academy of Sciences warned that oceans may rise between four inches and three feet by the year 2100. Four inches may not sound like a lot, but it would imperil parts of coastal Florida and the Carolinas, among other places. A three-foot sea-level rise would flood significant portions of Bangladesh, threaten the national survival of the Netherlands, and damage many coastal cities, while submerging pretty much all of the world's trendy beach destinations to boot. And the Asian Tigers? Shanghai and Hong Kong sit right on the water. Raise the deep a few feet, and these Tiger cities would be abandoned.⁸

Atlantic current that moves warm water north from the equator may be losing energy. If the North Atlantic current falters, temperatures could fall in Europe even as the world overall warms. Most of Europe lies to the north of Maine yet is temperate because the North Atlantic current carries huge volumes of warm water to the seas off Scotland; that warm water is Europe's weathermaker. Geological studies show that the North Atlantic current has stopped in the past. If this current stops again because of artificial climate change, Europe might take on the climate of present-day Newfoundland. As a result, it might depopulate, while the economic value of everything within its icy expanse declines. The European Union makes approximately the same contribution to the global economy as the United States makes: Significantly falling temperatures in Europe could trigger a worldwide recession.⁹

While staying ready to sell your holdings in Europe, look for purchase opportunities near the waters of the Arctic Circle. In 2005, a Russian research ship became the first surface vessel ever to reach the North Pole without the aid of an icebreaker. If arctic sea ice melts, shipping traffic will begin transiting the North Pole. Andrew Revkin's 2006 book, *The North Pole Was Here*, profiles Pat Broe, who in 1997 bought the isolated far-north port of Churchill, Manitoba, from the Canadian government for \$7. Assuming arctic ice continues to melt, the world's cargo vessels may begin sailing due north to shave thousands of miles



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off their trips, and the port of Churchill may be bustling. If arctic polar ice disappears and container vessels course the North Pole seas, shipping costs may decline—to the benefit of consumers. Asian manufacturers, especially, should see their costs of shipping to the United States and the European Union fall. At the same time, heavily trafficked southern shipping routes linking East Asia to Europe and to America's East Coast could see less traffic, and port cities along that route—such as Singapore—might decline.¹⁰ Concurrently, good relations with Nunavut could become of interest to the world's corporations.

Oh, and there may be oil under the arctic waters. Who would own that oil? The United States, Russia, Canada, Norway, and Denmark already assert legally complex claims to parts of the North Pole seas—including portions that other nations consider open waters not subject to sovereign control. Today it seems absurd to imagine the governments of the world fighting over the North Pole

seas, but in the past many causes of battle have seemed absurd before the artillery fire began. Canada is already conducting naval exercises in the arctic waters, and making no secret of this.

Then again, perhaps ownership of these waters will go in an entirely different direction. The 21st century is likely to see a movement to create private-property rights in the ocean (ocean property rights are the most promising solution to overfishing of the open seas). Private-property rights in the North Pole seas, should they come into existence, might generate a rush to rival the Sooners' settlement of Oklahoma in the late 1800s.¹¹

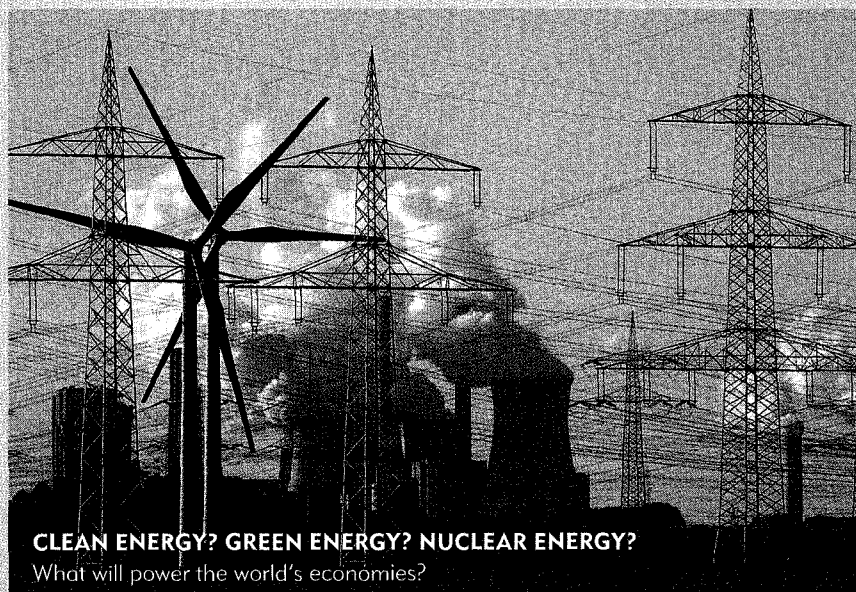
Whatever happens to our oceans, climate change might also cause economic turmoil by affecting freshwater supplies. Today nearly all primary commodities, including petroleum, appear in ample supply. Freshwater is an exception: China is depleting aquifers at an alarming rate in order to produce enough rice to feed itself, while freshwater

A 401(K) FOR A WARMING WORLD

Climate change could have a broad impact on industrial sectors, and thus help or hurt your stock investments and retirement funds. What types of equity might you want to favor or avoid?

Big Pharma. Rising temperatures might extend the range of tropical diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. A 2005 World Health Organization report suggested that global warming may already cause 150,000 deaths annually, mainly by spreading illnesses common to hot nations. If diseases of the poor, low-latitude regions of the world began to reach developed countries, large amounts of capital would flow into the pharmaceuticals sector as the affluent began to demand protection—so it could prove profitable to be holding pharmaceutical stocks, although exactly which shares to buy would be influenced by laboratory discoveries that are impossible to predict. But consider the social upside: If malaria threatened the United States, this scourge might finally be cured.

Health-Care Service Providers. The contrarian view is that a warming world would, on balance, improve public health in high-latitude areas. Though hot regions in the developing world experience high rates of communicable diseases that scare us, people are still



CLEAN ENERGY? GREEN ENERGY? NUCLEAR ENERGY?
What will power the world's economies?

far more likely to die from the cold than from heat—overall death rates in winter are much higher than those in summer. Retirees living in Florida, for instance, have less reason to fear a hot summer than those living in Vermont have to fear a cold winter. If the cold areas of affluent nations became less cold, we would expect longevity to increase. That would be good for society, and also a reason to hold health-care (and pharmaceutical) stocks, since the elderly require far more in the way of hospital services and drugs. The assisted-care industry might also be in for a long, bullish run.

Electricity Producers. The World Energy Council has estimated that global demand for electricity will triple by 2050. The lion's share of the increased demand will be in developing nations, but the United States and the European Union nations will need more megawatts too—and that's even assuming increases in energy efficiency. It is all but certain that some form of greenhouse-gas regulation will come to the United States; many Fortune 500 CEOs already assume this. The result will be an electricity sector that's much more technology- and knowledge-sensitive than today's. Lots of brainpower and skill will be

is scarce in much of the Middle East and parts of Africa. Freshwater depletion is especially worrisome in Egypt, Libya, and several Persian Gulf states. Greenhouse-effect science is so uncertain that researchers have little idea whether a warming world would experience more or less precipitation. If it turns out that rain and snow decline as the world warms, dwindling supplies of drinking water and freshwater for agriculture may be the next resource emergency. For investors this would suggest a cautious view of the booms in China and Dubai, as both places may soon face freshwater-supply problems.² (Cost-effective desalinization continues to elude engineers.) On the other hand, where water rights are available in these areas, grab them.

Much of the effect that global warming will have on our water is speculative, so water-related climate change will be a high-risk/high-reward matter for investors and societies alike. The biggest fear is that artificially triggered climate change will shift rainfall away from today's

productive breadbasket areas and toward what are now deserts or, worse, toward the oceans. (From the human perspective, all ocean rain represents wasted freshwater.) The reason Malthusian catastrophes have not occurred as humanity has grown is that for most of the last half century, farm yields have increased faster than population. But the global agricultural system is perilously poised on the assumption that growing conditions will continue to be good in the breadbasket areas of the United States, India, China, and South America. If rainfall shifts away from those areas, there could be significant human suffering for many, many years, even if, say, Siberian agriculture eventually replaces lost production elsewhere. By reducing farm yield, rainfall changes could also cause skyrocketing prices for commodity crops, something the global economy has rarely observed in the last 30 years.

Recent studies show that in the last few decades, precipitation in North America is increasingly the result of a

required to increase electricity generation and reduce greenhouse-gas emissions at the same time. It's reasonable to guess that power-production firms with a track record of innovation, such as Duke Energy (which pioneered many techniques to improve the efficiency of nuclear-power plants), will be the kind of energy-sector stocks to own. Don't be surprised if nuclear energy, which is nearly greenhouse-gas-free, enjoys a boom in coming decades. General Electric, Westinghouse, and Siemens are some of the leading producers of new "inherently safe" power reactors designed so they can't melt down even if all safety systems are turned off.

"Green" Energy. Renewable-energy industries—such as solar energy and biofuels—might seem like a promising place for 401(k) chips, but bear in mind that no form of green energy is yet cost-competitive with fossil energy, and no one knows which may eventually win in the marketplace. Solar-cell production, for example, is an expanding sector, but nearly all large solar cells for residential and commercial applications are currently sold in California, Japan, or Germany, which heavily subsidize the installation of solar power. Many investors today are racing to ethanol, but wariness seems advisable. Bill Gates has already invested \$84 million in a start-up called Pacific Ethanol; venture-capital firms have moved into the ethanol "space." If the smart money is already there, you're too late. Besides, BP and DuPont are now

looking past ethanol to bet on butanol, a crop-derived petroleum substitute with superior technical properties.

Agriculture. Should growing seasons and rainfall patterns change quickly, genetic engineering of crop plants might become essential to society's future. DuPont, Monsanto, Syngenta, and other firms that are perfecting genetic improvement of crops—either through gene splicing or via natural crossbreeding aided by genetic analysis—could become even bigger players if there is significant climate change.

The Deus Ex Machina Industry. Be wary of start-ups and venture capitalists who may soon talk up "geoengineering." In theory, it could be possible to cause the seas to absorb more greenhouse gases, if oceans were fertilized with substances that encourage the growth of marine organisms that need carbon dioxide. In theory, the upper atmosphere could be seeded with shiny fleck-sized particles that bounce sunlight back into space, cooling the Earth. In theory, if volcanoes could be made more active, their emissions also would reduce global temperature by blocking some sunlight. (The sole exception to the last two decades of warm years resulted from the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo, in the Philippines, which caused cool weather worldwide.) It's likely that some investors will be tempted by offers of early stakes in geo-engineering enterprises. But it's unlikely

that any government will ever approve an experiment involving the entire planet.

Want the profile of what seems the perfect large firm of the future? Think General Electric. The company builds nuclear-power reactors and is ready to build extremely efficient coal-fired power plants, which are likely to become more commonplace than nuclear reactors owing to lower cost and less political opposition. George W. Bush talks grandly of FutureGen, a billion-dollar federal initiative for a prototype coal-fired power plant that emits hardly any greenhouse gases. But the FutureGen crash program doesn't even break ground until 2009. Meanwhile, GE has already completed the engineering work for an advanced coal-fired power plant able to operate with negligible greenhouse-gas emissions. If greenhouse-gas regulations are enacted, GE may be swamped with orders for its new coal-fired generating station. GE has also recently engineered jet engines, power turbines, and diesel locomotives that require less fuel, and hence release less greenhouse gas, than those now in use. The company has also made serious investments in wind turbines, photovoltaic cells, and other zero-emission energy forms. This big, profit-conscious corporation is at the cutting edge of preparation for a greenhouse world—which is likely to keep GE big and profitable.
—GREGG EASTERBROOK

few downpours rather than lots of showers. Downpours cause flooding and property damage, while being of less use to agriculture than frequent soft rains. Because the relationship between artificially triggered climate change and rainfall is conjectural, investors presently have no way to avoid buying land in places that someday might be hit with frequent downpours. But this concern surely raises a red flag about investments in India, Bangladesh, and Indonesia, where monsoon rains are already a leading social problem.¹⁵

Water-related investments might be attractive in another way: for hydropower. Zero-emission hydropower might become a premium energy form if greenhouse gases are strictly regulated. Quebec is the Saudi Arabia of roaring water. Already the hydropower complex around James Bay is one of the world's leading sources of water-generated electricity. For 30 years, environmentalists and some Cree activists opposed plans to construct a grand hydropower complex that essentially would dam all large rivers flowing into the James and Hudson bays. But it's not hard to imagine Canada completing the reengineering of northern Quebec for hydropower, if demand from New England and the Midwest becomes strong enough. Similarly, there is hydropower potential in the Chilean portions of Patagonia. This is a wild and beautiful region little touched by human activity—and an intriguing place to snap up land for hydropower reservoirs.¹⁶

ADAPTATION

Last October, the treasury office of the United Kingdom estimated that unless we adapt, global warming could eventually subtract as much as 20 percent of the gross domestic product from the world economy. Needless to say, if that happens, not even the cleverest portfolio will help you. This estimate is worst-case, however, and has many economists skeptical. Optimists think dangerous global warming might be averted at surprisingly low cost (see "Some Convenient Truths," September 2006). Once regulations create a profit incentive for the invention of greenhouse-gas-reducing technology, an outpouring of innovation is likely. Some of those who formulate greenhouse-gas-control ideas will become rich; everyone will benefit from the environmental safeguards the ideas confer.

Enactment of some form of binding greenhouse-gas rules is now essential both to slow the rate of greenhouse-gas accumulation and to create an incentive for inventors, engineers, and businesspeople to devise the ideas that will push society beyond the fossil-fuel age. *The New York Times* recently grouched that George W. Bush's fiscal 2007 budget includes only \$4.2 billion for federal research that might cut greenhouse-gas emissions. This is the wrong concern: Progress would be faster if the federal government spent nothing at all on greenhouse-gas-reduction research—but enacted regulations that gave the private

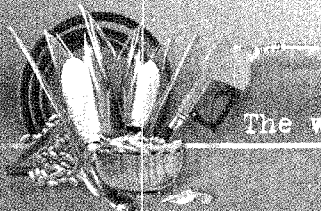
sector a significant profit motive to find solutions that work in actual use, as opposed to on paper in government studies. The market has caused the greenhouse-gas problem, and the market is the best hope of solving it. Offering market incentives for the development of greenhouse-gas controls—indeed, encouraging profit making in greenhouse-gas controls—is the most promising path to avoiding the harm that could befall the dispossessed of developing nations as the global climate changes.

Yet if global-warming theory is right, higher global temperatures are already inevitable. Even the most optimistic scenario for reform envisions decades of additional greenhouse-gas accumulation in the atmosphere, and that in turn means a warming world. The warming may be manageable, but it is probably unstoppable in the short term. This suggests that a major investment sector of the near future will be climate-change adaptation. Crops that grow in high temperatures, homes and buildings designed to stay cool during heat waves, vehicles that run on far less fuel, waterfront structures that can resist stronger storms—the list of needed adaptations will be long, and all involve producing, buying, and selling. Environmentalists don't like talk of adaptation, as it implies making our peace with a warmer world. That peace, though, must be made—and the sooner businesses, investors, and entrepreneurs get to work, the better.

Why, ultimately, should nations act to control greenhouse gases, rather than just letting climate turmoil happen and seeing who profits? One reason is that the cost of controls is likely to be much lower than the cost of rebuilding the world. Coastal cities could be abandoned and rebuilt inland, for instance, but improving energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse-gas emissions in order to stave off rising sea levels should be far more cost-effective. Reforms that prevent major economic and social disruption from climate change are likely to be less expensive, across the board, than reacting to the change. The history of antipollution programs shows that it is always cheaper to prevent emissions than to reverse any damage they cause.

For the United States, there's another argument that is particularly keen. The present ordering of the world favors the United States in nearly every respect—political, economic, even natural, considering America's excellent balance of land and resources. Maybe a warming world would favor the United States more; this is certainly possible. But when the global order already places America at No. 1, why would we want to run the risk of climate change that alters that order? Keeping the world economic system and the global balance of power the way they are seems very strongly in the U.S. national interest—and keeping things the way they are requires prevention of significant climate change. That, in the end, is what's in it for us. ▀

Gregg Easterbrook is an *Atlantic* contributing editor, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution, and the author of *The Progress Paradox* (2003).



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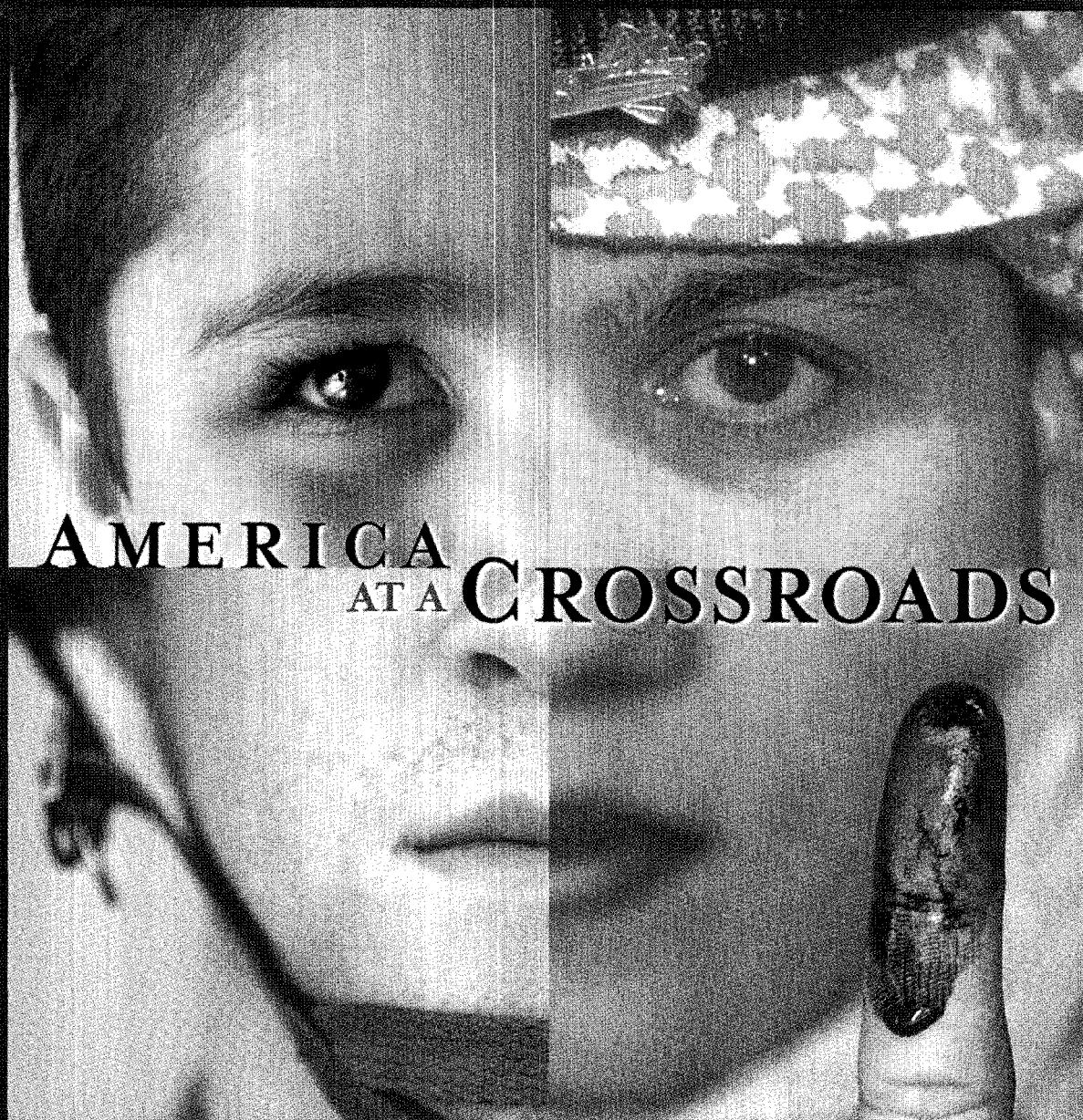
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The violence in Darfur is usually attributed to ethnic hatred.
But global warming may be primarily to blame.

BY STEPHAN FARIS

The Real Roots of Darfur

SUDANESE LIBERATION ARMY soldiers
walk through the desert.

To truly understand the crisis in Darfur—and it has been profoundly misunderstood—you need to look back to the mid-1980s, before the violence between African and Arab began to simmer. Alex de Waal, now a program director at the Social Science Research Council, was there at that time, as a doctoral candidate doing anthropological fieldwork. Earlier this year, he told me a story that, he says, keeps coming back to him. ¶ De Waal was traveling through the dry scrub of Darfur, studying indigenous reactions »

to the drought that gripped the region. In a herders' camp near the desert's border, he met with a bedridden and nearly blind Arab sheikh named Hilal Abdalla, who said he was noticing things he had never seen before: Sand blew into fertile land, and the rare rain washed away alluvial soil. Farmers who had once hosted his tribe and his camels were now blocking their migration; the land could no longer support both herder and farmer. Many tribesmen had lost their stock and scratched at millet farming on marginal plots.

CLEAN

Still, against the heavy wind,
the spoon of cherry wood

no longer moves
the liquid in the pot.

Locked in the lamplight sweat
of the eternal night winter,

the disturbed quiet is quite safe—
suffocates the closed room.

Looking out, all that can be
seen is a knothole in the oak tree.

Gone is the fig, the oyster, the mango,
the red candle—its wick.

Gone is the bean, the blackberry, the carrot,
the parsnip, the horn of the rhinoceros.

The cupboard is both
emptied and latched.

The man in his blister heat
will not come back.

The kitchen is so clean,
everything's in its nook.

—SUSAN HAHN

Susan Hahn's recent collections include *Mother in Summer* (2002), *Self/Pity* (2005), and the forthcoming *The Scarlet Ibis*. She is the editor of *TriQuarterly*.

The God-given order was broken, the sheikh said, and he feared the future. "The way the world was set up since time immemorial was being disturbed," recalled de Waal. "And it was bewildering, depressing. And the consequences were terrible."

In 2003, another scourge, now infamous, swept across Darfur. Janjaweed fighters in military uniforms, mounted on camels and horses, laid waste to the region. In a campaign of ethnic cleansing targeting Darfur's blacks, the armed militiamen raped women, burned houses, and tortured and killed men of fighting age. Through whole swathes of the region, they left only smoke curling into the sky.

At their head was a 6-foot-4 Arab with an athletic build and a commanding presence. In a conflict the United States would later call genocide, he topped the State Department's list of suspected war criminals. De Waal recognized him: His name was Musa Hilal, and he was the sheikh's son.

The fighting in Darfur is usually described as racially motivated, pitting mounted Arabs against black rebels and civilians. But the fault lines have their origins in another distinction, between settled farmers and nomadic herders fighting over failing lands. The aggression of the warlord Musa Hilal can be traced to the fears of his father, and to how climate change shattered a way of life.

Until the rains began to fail, the sheikh's people lived amicably with the settled farmers. The nomads were welcome passers-through, grazing their camels on the rocky hillsides that separated the fertile plots. The farmers would share their wells, and the herders would feed their stock on the leavings from the harvest. But with the drought, the farmers began to fence off their land—even fallow land—for fear it would be ruined by passing herds. A few tribes drifted elsewhere or took up farming, but the Arab herders stuck to their fraying livelihoods—nomadic herding was central to their cultural identity. (The distinction between "Arab" and "African" in Darfur is defined more by lifestyle than any physical difference: Arabs are generally herders, Africans typically farmers. The two groups are not racially distinct.)

The name *Darfur* means "Land of the Fur" (the largest single tribe of farmers in Darfur), but the vast region holds the tribal lands—the *dars*—of many tribes. In the late 1980s, landless and increasingly desperate Arabs began banding together to wrest their own *dar* from the black farmers. In 1987, they published a manifesto of racial superiority, and clashes broke out between Arabs and Fur. About 3,000 people, mostly Fur, were killed, and hundreds of villages and nomadic camps were burned before a peace agreement was signed in 1989. More fighting in the 1990s entrenched the divisions between Arabs and non-Arabs, pitting the Arab pastoralists against the Fur, Zaghawa, and Massaleit farmers. In these disputes, Sudan's central

government, seated in Khartoum, often supported the Arabs politically and sometimes provided arms.

In 2003, a rebellion began in Darfur—a reaction against Khartoum's neglect and political marginalization of the region. And while the rebels initially sought a pan-ethnic front, the schism between those who opposed the government and those who supported it broke largely on ethnic lines. Even so, the conflict was rooted more in land envy than in ethnic hatred. "Interestingly, most of the Arab tribes who have their own land rights did not join the government's fight," says David Mozersky, the International Crisis Group's project director for the Horn of Africa.

Why did Darfur's lands fail? For much of the 1980s and '90s, environmental degradation in Darfur and other parts of the Sahel (the semi-arid region just south of the Sahara) was blamed on the inhabitants. Dramatic declines in rainfall were attributed to mistreatment of the region's vegetation. Imprudent land use, it was argued, exposed more rock and sand, which absorb less sunlight than plants, instead reflecting it back toward space. This cooled the air near the surface, drawing clouds downward and reducing the chance of rain. "Africans were said to be doing it to themselves," says Isaac Held, a senior scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

But by the time of the Darfur conflict four years ago, scientists had identified another cause. Climate scientists fed historical sea-surface temperatures into a variety of computer models of atmospheric change. Given the particular pattern of ocean-temperature changes worldwide, the models strongly predicted a disruption in African monsoons. "This was not caused by people cutting trees or overgrazing," says Columbia University's Alessandra Giannini, who led one of the analyses. The roots of the drying of Darfur, she and her colleagues had found, lay in changes to the global climate.

The extent to which those changes can be blamed on human activities remains an open question. Most scientists agree that greenhouse gases have warmed the tropical and southern oceans. But just how much artificial warming—as opposed to natural drifts in oceanic temperatures—contributed to the drought that struck Darfur is as debatable as the relationship between global warming and the destruction of New Orleans. "Nobody can say that Hurricane Katrina was definitely caused by climate change," says Peter Schwartz, the co-author of a 2003 Pentagon report on climate change and national security. "But we can say that climate change means more Katrinas. For any single storm, as with any single drought, it's difficult to say. But we can say we'll get more big storms and more severe droughts."

With countries across the region and around the world suffering similar pressures, some see Darfur as a canary in

the coal mine, a foretaste of climate-driven political chaos. Environmental degradation "creates very dry tinder," says de Waal. "So if anyone wants to put a match to it, they can light it up." Combustion might be particularly likely in areas where the political or social geography is already fragile. "Climate change is likely to cause tension all over the world," says Idean Salehyan, a political scientist at the University of North Texas. Whether or not it sparks conflict, he says, depends on the strength, goodwill, and competence of local and national governments. (For more on the economic, political, and military tensions that global warming might create, see "Global Warming: What's in It for You?" by Gregg Easterbrook, on page 52.)

In Darfur itself, recognizing climate change as a player in the conflict means seeking a solution beyond a political treaty between the rebels and the government. "One can see a way of de-escalating the war," says de Waal. "But unless you get at the underlying roots, it'll just spring back." One goal of the internationally sponsored peace process is the eventual return of locals to their land. But what if there's no longer enough decent land to go around?

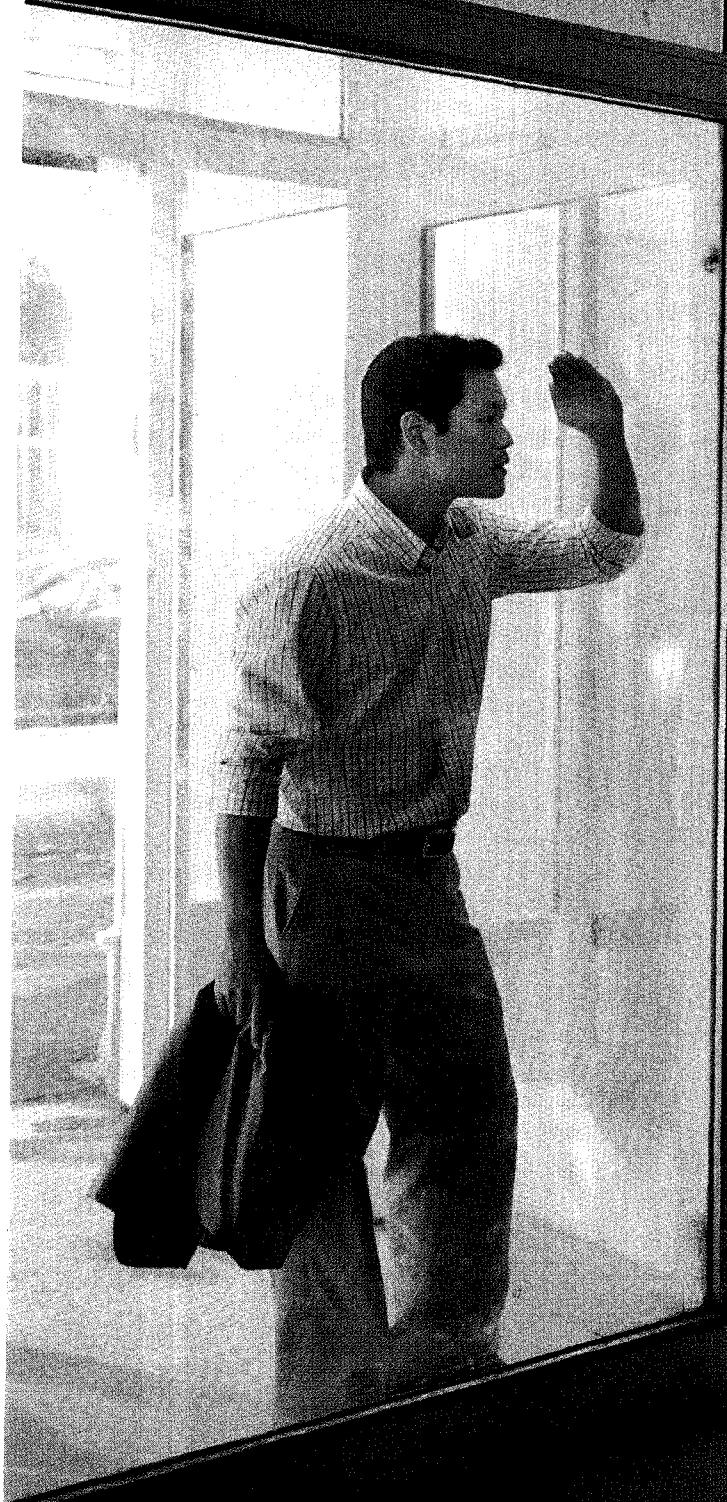
To create a new status quo, one with the moral authority of the God-given order mourned by Musa Hilal's father, local leaders would have to put aside old agreements and carve out new ones. Lifestyles and agricultural practices would likely need to change to accommodate many tribes on more fragile land. Widespread investment and education would be necessary.

But with Khartoum uncooperative, creating the conditions conducive to these sorts of solutions would probably require not only forceful foreign intervention but also a long-term stay. Environmental degradation means the local authorities have little or no surplus to use for tribal buy-offs, land deals, or coalition building. And fighting makes it nearly impossible to rethink land ownership or management. "The first thing you've got to do is stop the carnage and allow moderates to come to the fore," says Thomas Homer-Dixon, a political scientist at the University of Toronto. Yet even once that happens, he admits, "these processes can take decades."

Among the implications arising from the ecological origin of the Darfur crisis, the most significant may be moral. If the region's collapse was in some part caused by the emissions from our factories, power plants, and automobiles, we bear some responsibility for the dying. "This changes us from the position of Good Samaritans—disinterested, uninvolved people who may feel a moral obligation—to a position where we, unconsciously and without malice, created the conditions that led to this crisis," says Michael Byers, a political scientist at the University of British Columbia. "We cannot stand by and look at it as a situation of discretionary involvement. We are already involved." ▀

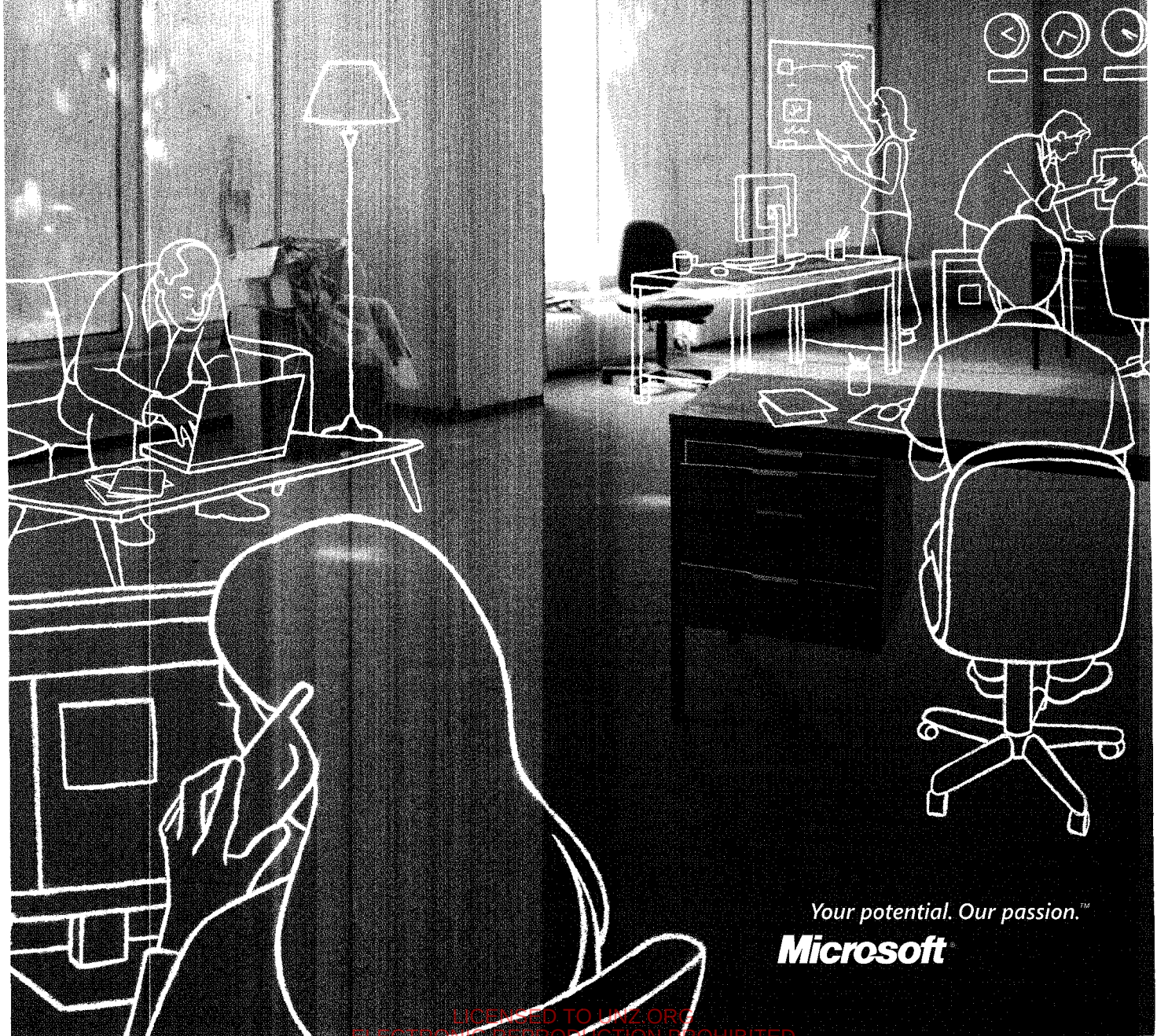
Stephan Faris is a freelance journalist.

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A reality-TV show
is teaching the
Chinese how to
succeed in business.

BY JAMES FALLOWS



Win in China!

You think TV is bad in America, and then you watch it someplace else. For all of its defects, American TV generally has high production values—attractive people to look at, sets and staging that don't seem homemade—and it is often the place where new ideas get their start, just before they become worldwide clichés. ¶ Right now the curse of Chinese TV, apart from its being state-controlled and de facto censored, is the proliferation of stupid low-budget “reality” shows. The oddest »

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF WIN IN CHINA



CONTESTANTS on *Win in China* square off.

The PK stage of *Win* served the function of the Tribal Council in *Survivor* or the Boardroom in *The Apprentice*: After a contest or judges' assessment each week, two of that episode's competitors ended up pitted against each other in a three-minute lightning elimination. This is PK, in which one opponent issues a question, challenge, or taunt, and the other tries to answer, outwit, and provoke the first. Once done speaking, a competitor slams a hand down on a big button, stopping his or her own clock (as with a chess-match timer) and starting the opponent's. Faster and faster, each contestant tries to manage the time so as to get the very last word. The audience gasps, cheers, and roars with laughter at the gibes—and at the end, one contestant is “killed,” as determined by audience vote or a panel of judges. Even if you can barely follow the language, it's exciting.

But something else distinguishes *Win in China*—not just from the slew of other reality shows but also from its American model, *The Apprentice*, with Donald Trump. “The purpose of *The*

Apprentice was very functional,” Wang Lifen, the producer and on-camera host of the show, told me (in English) shortly after the final episode. “There's some job that already exists, and Donald Trump is just looking for somebody to fill it, while providing entertainment.” Wang said that she had higher ambitions for her show: “We want to teach values. Our dream for the show is to enlighten Chinese people and help them realize their own dreams.” Having seen the program and talked with contestants and compared it with some superficially similar Chinese reality shows, I don't scoff at what she said.

The didactic and uplifting ambitions of the show could be considered classically Chinese, the latest expression of a value-imprinting impulse that stretches from the Analects of Confucius to the sayings of Chairman Mao. Or they could be considered, like the Horatio Alger novels of young, muscular America, signs of an economy at an expansive moment when many people want to understand how to seize new opportunities. Either way, the particular message delivered by the show seems appropriate to China at this stage of its growth. Reduced to a moral, *Win in China* instructs Chinese people that they

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Watch subtitled clips from *Win in China*
at www.theatlantic.com/chinav

reality show I've come across while channel surfing was a “World's Strongest Man”-type contest between teams of midgets. The cruelest, put on by the state-owned China Central Television (CCTV), pitted young families against each other in elimination events. Each family team had three members—father, mother, elementary-school-aged child—and did coordinated stunts. Three families survived each show to appear in future rounds, and three were sent home, the children inconsolable and the husbands and wives looking daggers at each other.

Fortunately there is also a best Chinese reality show, or at least one that my wife and I followed avidly through its increasingly suspenseful Tuesday-night episodes last year. We first heard of *Ying Zai Zhongguo*, or *Win in China*, from a Chinese-American friend, Baifang Schell, who was involved in the production. We became so interested that in December we traveled to Beijing to be in the audience at CCTV's cavernous main studio for the live, final episode, in which one grand champion was chosen from five remaining contestants. Like many other Chinese reality shows, this one featured a segment known by the English letters “PK.” This means nothing to most English speakers (penalty kick?), but it is widely recognized in China as meaning “Player Kill” in online games.

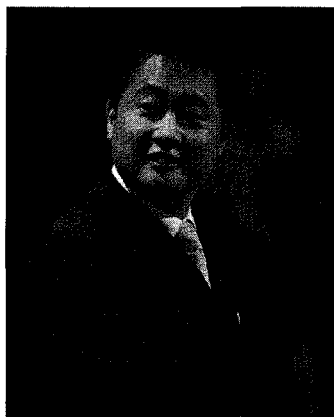
have chances never open to their compatriots before—but also that, as one contestant told me at the end of the show, “The only one I can rely on is myself.”

Wang Lifen moved from Beijing to Washington, D.C., in the fall of 2004, for a one-year fellowship at the Brookings Institution. She was then in her late 30s and was an influential figure in CCTV’s news division, where she had created and produced documentaries and talk shows. By the time she returned to CCTV, a year later, she was ready to act on a question she’d asked while watching American TV: What would an improved, Sinitized version of *The Apprentice* look like?

It would be Chinese in being huge. There would be thousands of initial candidates, with entry open to any adult “of Chinese origin” anywhere in the world. More than 100 (versus *The Apprentice*’s 18) would have a serious

winning contestants would use it to create or expand. Twenty percent would belong to the contestants, and 15 percent to the show’s production company. The remaining 15 percent would go by “lucky draw” to viewers who had voted for candidates, via mobile-phone text messages, during the show’s run. In effect, the many weeks of the program (33 episodes were shown in all, some live) amounted to a drawn-out, public version of a pitch to venture capitalists (the investors) from entrepreneurs seeking their backing (the contestants). Every week, contestants would be put through some kind of quiz or business-oriented team challenge that would whittle their numbers down. Wang had an additional hope for this process: that it would give viewers practical tips on starting businesses of their own.

Within a few months of her return, Wang had rounded up the financial backing, gotten the show on CCTV’s schedule, and begun the hunt for candidates. (China is a timeless



OUR CANDIDATES: Zhou Jin, Song Wenming, Zhou Yu, Zhao Yao

chance to compete on-camera for the prize. The nature of that prize indicated why *Win in China* could seem more American than its American model. Instead of a job and a paycheck within a Trump-style empire, Wang offered seed money for new entrepreneurial ventures—and for more than just one contestant. By Chinese standards, the sums were enormous. The ultimate victor would receive 10 million yuan, or nearly \$1.3 million. The runner-up would get 7 million yuan, and the three other finalists would get 5 million yuan apiece. With other prizes and incentives, the money the show was offering came to nearly \$4 million.

This would be large even for a U.S. show, but the source of the prizes was even more unusual. Wang raised the money not from sponsors or the network but from individual investors in China—for instance, Andrew Yan, of Softbank Asia Infrastructure Fund, who had recently been named “Venture Capitalist of the Year” by the Chinese Venture Capital Association. Yan and a few other investors, including Kathy Xu, of Capital Today, and Hugo Shong, of the U.S.-based company IDG, put up the pool of prize money—in return for a 50 percent share in the real-world businesses the

civilization and so on, but today’s business deals can happen very fast.) Her team posted Web notices and placed ads in 20 newspapers around the country, asking potential entrepreneurs to send in résumés and business plans. In March 2006, the top 3,000 (!) files were sent to screening teams, which reduced the pool to about 500. Interviews of at least 15 minutes apiece then produced 108 semifinalists—an auspicious number, because of the “108 heroes” (also known variously as the “108 bandits” and “108 generals”) of a famed uprising in the Shandong mountains a thousand years ago.

All of the 108 came to Beijing at their own expense and made a mass climb of the Great Wall, along with the investors, producers, and judges, to build team spirit for the challenges ahead. Then, in one televised debut episode, the 108 were divided into two big teams and winnowed down to a field of 36, based on their performance in a computerized simulation of business decisions. Meanwhile, all 108 were given off-camera seminars on finance, personnel management, and other skills each would need as an entrepreneur.

Through the next stage, the 36 survivors appeared in groups of four before panels of judges that included

prominent Chinese business and academic figures. The best known was Jack Ma, co-founder and CEO of China's dominant e-commerce site, Alibaba. Each contestant had two minutes to present his or her business plan (three women were among the 36), after which the judges would begin the interrogation. What about holes in the plan? What was Plan B, if the sales projections didn't pan out? Why was this plan better than other candidates'? Often the questions came from investors whose own money was at stake.

On September 5, the producers held a reception at CCTV's Beijing headquarters for 6,000 guests: contestants, friends and family, press, and business dignitaries. The 12 finalists were announced—and then taken away to the Huang Yuan hotel in Beijing, where they would spend the next four weeks being filmed competing.

The seven further weeks of the show, which took the 12 contestants down to the five who would compete in the finale we went to, drew an audience that grew to 5 million (considered large for this "serious" a show), were discussed avidly in numerous blogs, and had a structure more or less familiar from American reality shows. The competitive pattern was essentially like that of *The Apprentice*: The 12 contestants were divided into two teams, which then competed against each other in some real-world business task—selling life insurance, raising money for charity, improvising a solution to some other business problem. Members of the winning team got to come back for the next episode. Members of the losing team went through various other assessments that included a final PK. Based on how the pair sounded when debating, a panel of judges would send one or the other home.

All the contestants were interesting, but we found ourselves rooting for four. Zhou Jin, one of two women among the final 12, was general manager of an advertising agency, and her project was to develop new labor-training services. She had been seven months pregnant when the competition began, and was granted permission for a brief absence from the competition, but then fought her way back into consideration with strong performances. Ms. Zhou had a sassy air and, as best I could judge from others' reactions, a sharp tongue. She had a lot of backing in blogs because of the way she handled her pregnancy.

We came to think of Song Wenming as the social-conscience candidate. He was a mild-looking, baby-faced man in his early 30s from Anhui province, an impoverished area many of whose people end up as illegal migrant workers in the big coastal cities. Song himself had earned an M.B.A. and held a job with a big international accounting firm. He resigned and, with two friends, started an employment firm to match Anhui people with jobs. His business plan was to expand these operations with new capital.

Zhou Yu was jokingly called by his competitors "Wolf" or "Wild Wolf," but we thought of him as Country Boy.

He was a tall, rangy 35-year-old with a buzz cut who had worked for years in the clothing business, and his business plan was to expand factories for lingerie and other ladies' apparel. In manner, he was much earthier than most of the other contestants—barking out remarks, grimacing, predictably losing his temper at some point in each show. Among the final 12, he was the only one not to have gone past high school, and during PKs he talked about the limits of book learning and the value of the school of hard knocks. He was a favorite in mobile-phone voting.

Then there was Zhao Yao, who struck us as the smoothest of the candidates. He grew up in Beijing but now lives in Los Angeles, having been based in America since 1995. He'd left China to get an M.B.A. at the University of Wyoming, and then tried to set up what he later described to



THE AUDIENCE rallies for its favorite contestants.

me as his "Wyoming-based self-service tour-planning company." After work-permit problems, he'd moved to California, where he was a computer programmer, an accountant, and a business consultant. He dreamed of bringing the "direct-response marketing" business to China. Direct-response marketing is the polite name for the infomercial business, and Zhao planned to set up the infrastructure—call centers, payment systems, customer service—that would allow the George Foreman Grill, for example, to be sold on TV in China (except here it would be the Jackie Chan Grill).

Week by week, our candidates survived, until the last episode before the live finale. Zhou Jin, the woman, and Zhao Yao, the Californian, were both on the team that lost that week's competition, and they were pitted against each other in the final PK. One or the other would go down! Their debate was relatively high-road, each pointing out his or her own strengths rather than the other's

weaknesses. Ms. Zhou looked shocked when the judges' result was announced: She would go on to the finals, and Zhao was out. This seemed shocking because Zhao had seemed, probably even to her, such a golden-boy candidate. When the series was over, I asked him, in English, how he interpreted his elimination. "If I had just spoken my mind, here is what I would have said before the verdict," he told me. "I would have told the judges, 'I don't think I've given you any reason to eliminate me. But the lady hasn't given you any reason to eliminate her. Under the circumstances—her being pregnant, the struggles of

a young mom, the public support—you should just take me out.'" As they did.

Everything about the live final show was meant to be spectacular. Most episodes had three judges; this time there were 11. In addition to famous investors, like Jack Ma and Hugo Shong, there were other prominent business figures, like Niu Gensheng, head of one of China's leading dairy companies. Introduced separately, and given the right to make the final selection, were the heads of the two most respected firms in all of China: Lenovo, the leading computer company, and Haier, which has a high reputation for quality and which absolutely dominates the domestic "white goods" market for refrigerators, washing machines, and so on. *Win* publicists said this was the first time the two CEOs, Yang Yuanqing of Lenovo and Zhang Ruimin of Haier, had made a joint appearance.

The two finalists who were not among our candidates were the first two eliminated in PKs. Then things got serious. Ms. Zhou, Song "Social Conscience" Wenming, and Zhou "Wild Wolf" Yu answered questions from the judges—and mobile-phone votes showed that Song had done best of the three. Thus the two Zhous had to face off in a PK, whose drama was apparent even if you didn't understand what they were saying. In an earlier round of questions, all five candidates had had to explain their greatest weakness. Mr. Zhou said that he had a bad temper—but that passion was a good thing in a leader! And so, he helpfully pointed out, was the kind of education you couldn't get from books. For her part, Ms. Zhou said that her attention was always flitting from subject to subject; on the other hand, that kind of alert eye could help in running a business.

During the PK, it was as if Ms. Zhou was trying to make Mr. Zhou explode. "You are avoiding my questions, maybe you don't have enough learning to answer." "They call you the Wolf, it would be better for the Wolf to stay in the wilderness." After Mr. Zhou (unwisely) mentioned that he was thinking of going back to school, she dug in: "Even if you get the diploma, it won't mean real skills." After inserting each of her barbs, Ms. Zhou would slap her PK button with a smile at the audience and a little rise of her eyebrows. Wild Wolf would splutter and yell, slamming his fist onto his button, and finally getting a near-ovation from the crowd when he said, "You question my skills, but I am standing here tonight! That should be proof enough for anyone!" He also had the last words, which were: "I'll talk to you later!"

As it turned out, in trying to provoke the Wolf, Ms. Zhou ended up mortally wounding them both. The judges declared him the victor over her in this PK—one said later that he was "like China itself, from a poor background, still crude, but proud of its rise"—and so she had to sit down.

PERSPECTIVE

*First learn perspective, Leonardo said,
then draw from nature.*

Stubbs's Whistlejacket answers
on a canvas nine feet tall

commissioned in 1762
by the second Marquess of Rockingham.

This horse looks out at any who look in,
prickeared, exaggerated mane and tail
caught in a half-levade, hocks behind heels.

O horse of my heart, hang on at this still point
as all around us open-air markets explode,

body parts rain down and families
rush to collect them, else no afterlife.

The priest insists that animals are sinless,
have no souls, won't appear in heaven,

his heaven, not the paradise
of expectant virgins. Where

Whistlejacket went is not revealed,
into the ground, perhaps, in his final pasture,
O horse of my heart, full nine feet tall.

—MAXINE KUMIN

Maxine Kumin's recent books include *Jack and Other New Poems* (2005) and *Mites to Mastodons: A Book of Animal Poems* (2006). She lives in New Hampshire.

The University of Florida is in Gainesville.

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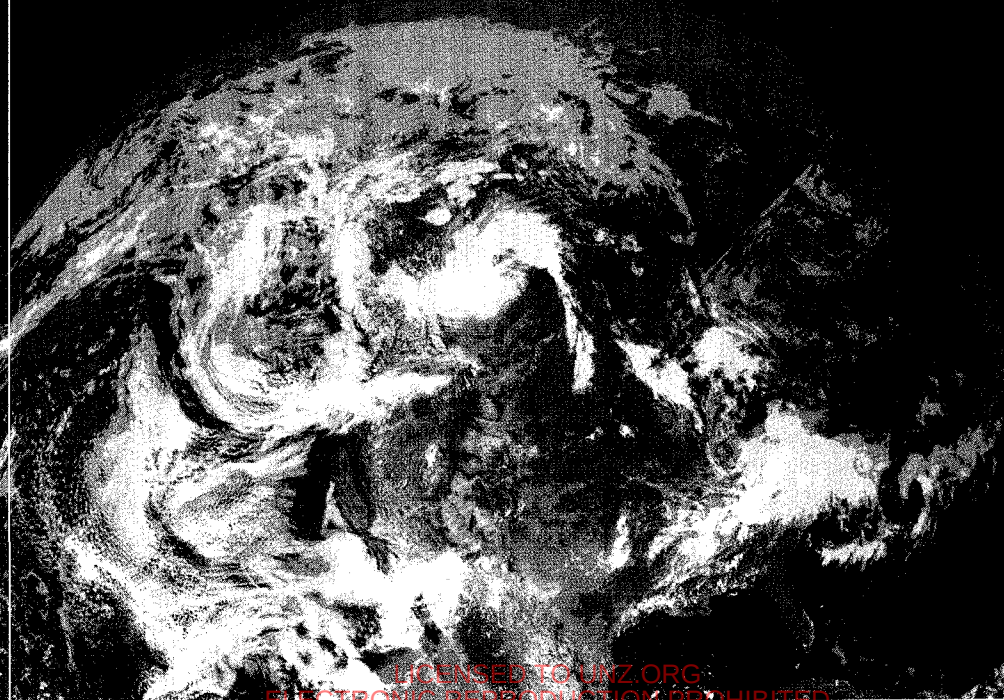
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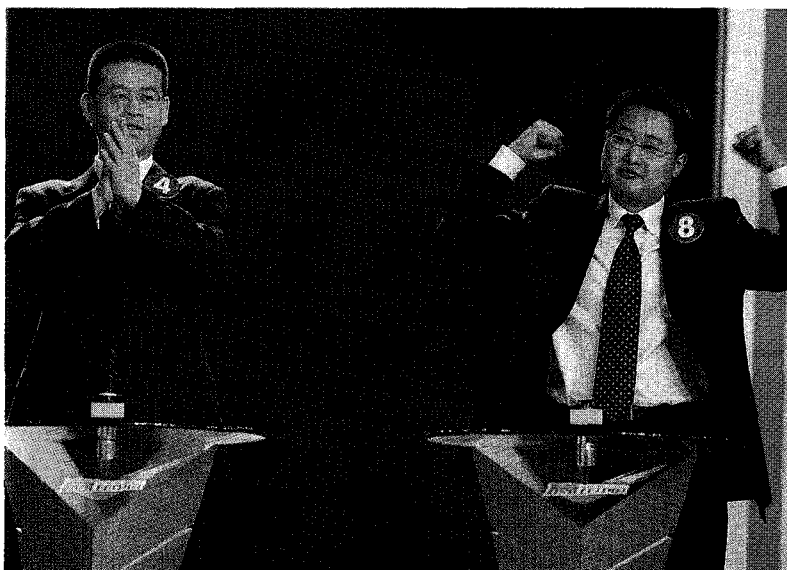
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But in the anticlimactic final choice between Mr. Zhou and Song Wenming, the M.B.A., Zhou's fiery and uncontrolled outbursts during his PK with Ms. Zhou proved his undoing. All 11 judges spoke, many saying that passion was great, but you needed a steady hand to build an enterprise. Song Wenming was nothing if not steady. The Haier and Lenovo CEOs glanced at each other and gave the winner's name: Song Wenming.



SONG "SOCIAL CONSCIENCE" WENMING triumphs over "The Wolf."

What had it all meant? I got in touch with our four contestants later on, Zhao Yao in person when he visited Shanghai and the others by e-mail through a translator. Each made veiled and provocative comments about the contest itself. When I asked Ms. Zhou about differences between the contest as she experienced it and what viewers saw on TV, she said she could not give any details, "because of traditional Chinese values" of discretion. "All I can say is that the exposure of the most repulsive side of human nature by us—if there was any, because of the award—did not, fortunately, appear in front of the audience." (She added that some altruistic moments had also escaped capture.) She said that she had often felt "condescension and suspicion" toward her talents from others on the show because of her gender, but hoped that her success would be encouraging for Chinese women in general. ("And after all, the United States only now has its first woman speaker of the House.")

When I asked Zhao Yao whether his life was different now, he began in stentorian tones—"The impact of my involvement in the show has been profound"—and then started laughing and said, "I am taking the tone promoted by the show, enthusiastic and assertive!" He said that becoming famous enough to be recognized on the street had been of great practical benefit, since a real venture capitalist had now offered him funding. "I do wonder if

the actors in U.S. reality shows would be expected to iron our own shirts and wash our own socks while encamped in a hotel room for a month," he added. "Maybe they do—I only know that's what we did."

Zhou Yu, the Wolf, said he was glad to have been the people's champion. He had also learned that his wife was now referred to as "Wolf's Wife." Song Wenming, the winner, said that he had grown exasperated at times but had been confident he'd do well as long as he could just be himself before the judges. In indirect or open ways, all of them made clear that what was shown onscreen had been trimmed, rearranged, and highlighted to seem more dramatic. "Maybe this is the 'reality' that reality TV is introducing us to!" Zhao Yao said.

About one point all of them sounded utterly sincere: their hope that the program would encourage more people in China to start their own businesses. Song Wenming put it in historic terms: Its age-old ethic of stability was part of the reason China had fallen so far behind Western countries, and even now, "Chinese culture does not facilitate creativity very much." He hoped the show would introduce the "positive power" of entrepreneurship. Ms. Zhou said she hoped potential entrepreneurs would learn the importance of both perseverance and passion. There was much more in the same vein.

"I have a close friend on the staff of a state-owned company," Wang Lifen, the show's producer, told me. "After the final episode, she called and said: 'I have to quit my work unit and my company! I have to be an entrepreneur, because I want a new life.'" Women must retire from state-owned companies in China by 55; men, by 60. "No one can provide for the next stage of life but me," Wang's friend told her. According to Wang, a "minister-level" official in the Chinese government called the head of CCTV when the series was over and asked, "How can we make everyone watch this show?" (In China, this might not be a purely rhetorical question.) As a start, CCTV has renewed the show for two more seasons.

"There is no religion in China, so it is very important to promote the right kind of values," Wang said. "Today for our society, the entrepreneur can be our hero."

"Hero" might be going too far, but the participants on *Win* seem to have been received in the press and blogs as modern Chinese role models. Having listened to their dreams and followed their onscreen contests, I cannot help wishing all of them well. Even more, I hope China's development is such that their show is eventually looked back on the way Horatio Alger's *Luck and Pluck* is: as an unsubtle and perhaps over-sincere effort to teach people the rules of peaceful prosperity. I hope it doesn't eventually become another bit of evidence about the Chinese bubble: the way people behaved when they thought the good times would always go on. ■

James Fallows is an Atlantic national correspondent.

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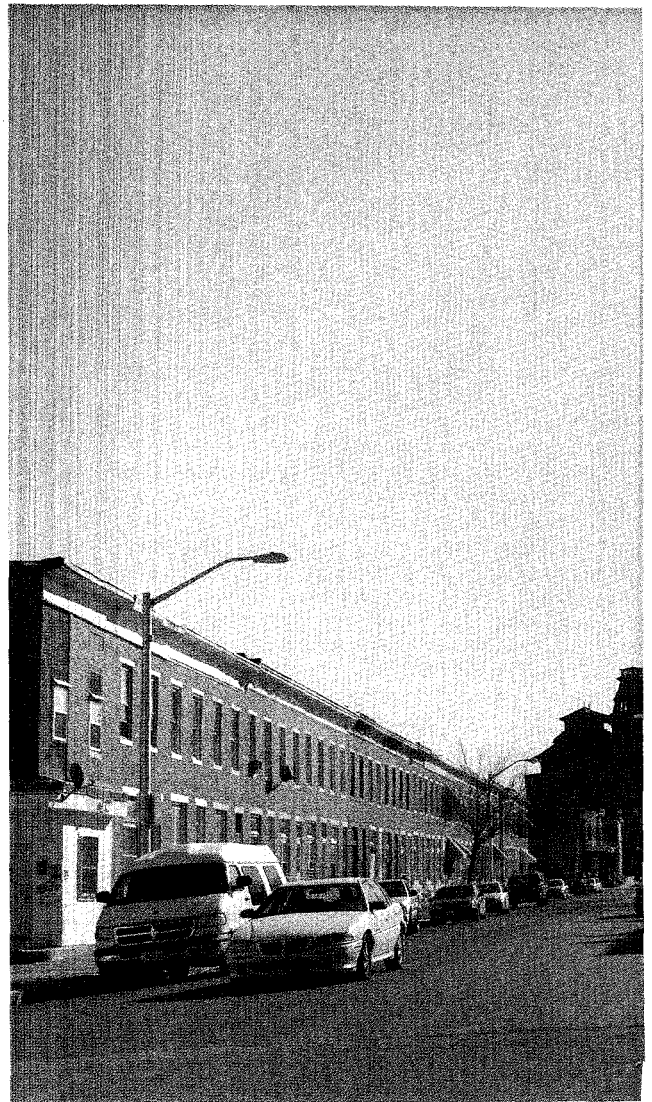


Across our inner cities, the code of *omerta* has spread from organized crime to ordinary citizens.

“Stop snitching” has become a motto to live—or die—by, as John Dowery Jr. discovered.

BY JEREMY KAHN

Photographs by Veronika Lukasova



The Story of a Snitch

John Dowery Jr. was happy to be working again. He had recently spent 11 months cooped up, a prisoner in his own home. In November 2003, two officers investigating the sound of gunfire in East Baltimore had arrested him after a car and foot chase. They said that Dowery, who had been riding in the back of a blue Mitsubishi, had jumped out of the car, placed a loaded .38-caliber handgun on the ground, and tried to flee. »



A 36-year-old heroin addict with a felony drug conviction, Dowery was facing federal prosecution and the prospect of up to eight years without parole. While he awaited trial, he had been “put on the box”—confined to his house, his whereabouts monitored by a transmitter locked around his ankle.

Staring down almost a decade behind bars can change a man, make him long for a second chance. And now it seemed Dowery had been given one. In October 2004, he had cut a deal, agreeing to become a witness in a murder trial. In exchange for his testimony, and as a result of good behavior, the feds had eased the terms of his pretrial detention. He had entered a drug-treatment program and landed a job working the graveyard shift at a condiment factory in the suburbs. For the first time in years, he was clean and sober, and life was looking up.

Each night, Dowery rode the commuter rail from the city to the plant; each morning, he rode it home again. He didn’t mind the odd hours; having worked as a baker, he was accustomed to being nocturnal. Shortly after dawn on October 19, 2005, he got off the train as usual. It was a brisk morning, with clouds dappling the sky but no hint of rain. He decided to skip the bus and walk the mile to his house on Bartlett Avenue.

He ambled past the massive Board of Education building, with its columns, and headed down North Avenue

to Greenmount Cemetery. There he turned left, passing the abandoned row houses where the “corner boys” were already opening for business, hoping to find a junkie in need of a morning fix. Farther on, past still-shuttered hair salons and check-cashing outfits, he turned down East 24th toward Bartlett. Just after seven o’clock, he reached his front porch and called out for his girlfriend, Yolanda, to let him in. Then he sensed something behind him.

He spun around to find two men dressed in black standing in his small front yard. One held a gun. As Dowery scrambled for his neighbor’s porch, the man pulled the trigger. Dowery leaped from the porch and raced around the side of his house, the two men close behind him, the gunman firing the whole way. He managed to stagger through his back door before his legs gave out. The attackers, believing their work accomplished, took off. A neighbor would later tell police that she heard one of them say, “We busted his motherfucking ass.”

Dowery had been shot in the back and in both arms and legs—six times in all. Only the skilled hands of the surgeons at Johns Hopkins spared his life. And yet, in the eyes of many people in the blocks around Bartlett, John Dowery had gotten what was coming to him.

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See www.theatlantic.com/snitch for an interview with Jeremy Kahn, a sidebar about crime in East Baltimore, and clips from the *Stop Fucking Snitching* and *Keep Talking* DVDs

In many Baltimore neighborhoods, talking to the law has become a mortal sin, a dishonorable act punishable by social banishment—or worse. Prosecutors in the city can rattle off a litany of brutal retaliations: houses firebombed, witnesses and their relatives shot, contract hits on 10-year-olds. Witness intimidation, they say, badly hampers their ability to fight crime, and it affects nearly every murder case they try.

Prosecutors in most major U.S. cities tell similar stories. Two years ago in Philadelphia, a drug kingpin was convicted of witness intimidation after he was taped threatening to kill those who testified against him. Five relatives of one witness in the case had already died, in a house fire that prosecutors believe was the drug lord's doing. Last year in San Francisco, two gang members beat a murder rap after the state's star witness turned up dead. Several years ago in Denver, a key homicide witness was sexually assaulted in what prosecutors believe was a "contract" attack designed to frighten him out of testifying.

Police and prosecutors have been contending with reluctant witnesses for decades. But according to law-enforcement experts, the problem is getting dramatically

The metastasis of this culture of silence in minority communities has been facilitated by a gradual breakdown of trust in the police and the government. The erosion began during the civil-rights era, when informants were a favorite law-enforcement tool against groups like the Black Panthers. But it accelerated because of the war on drugs. David Kennedy, the director of the Center for Crime Prevention and Control at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, in New York, told me: "This is the reward we have reaped for 20 years of profligate drug enforcement in these communities." When half the young black men in a neighborhood are locked up, on bail, or on parole, the police become the enemy. Add to this the spread of racialized myths—that crack was created by the CIA to keep blacks in their place, for example—and you get a toxic mix. Kennedy thinks the silence of many witnesses doesn't come from fear, but from anger.

The growing culture of silence helps to legitimize witness intimidation. At the same time, criminals have become more adept at enforcing the code, using increasingly sophisticated methods to bribe, intimidate, and harm witnesses. Defendants and their surrogates have obtained

Defendants are using increasingly sophisticated methods to spread the word about who is snitching. Threats have even been text-messed to the cell phones of sequestered witnesses.

worse, and is reflected in falling arrest and conviction rates for violent crimes. In cities with populations between half a million (for example, Tucson) and a million (Detroit), the proportion of violent crimes cleared by an arrest dropped from about 45 percent in the late 1990s to less than 35 percent in 2005, according to the FBI. Conviction rates have similarly dropped. At the same time, crime has spiked. Murder rates have risen more or less steadily since 2000. Last December, the FBI voiced concern over a jump in violent crime, which in 2005 showed its biggest increase in more than a decade.

The reasons for witnesses' reluctance appear to be changing and becoming more complex, with the police confronting a new cultural phenomenon: the spread of the gangland code of silence, or *omerta*, from organized crime to the population at large. Those who cooperate with the police are labeled "snitches" or "rats"—terms once applied only to jailhouse informants or criminals who turned state's evidence, but now used for "civilian" witnesses as well. This is particularly true in the inner cities, where gangsta culture has been romanticized through rap music and other forms of entertainment, and where the motto "Stop snitching," expounded in hip-hop lyrics and emblazoned on caps and T-shirts, has become a creed.

witnesses' supposedly confidential grand-jury testimony and tacked it to their doors, along with threatening notes. They have adopted new technology like cell-phone cameras and text-messaging to spread the word about who is snitching; threats have even been text-messed to the phones of sequestered witnesses. And every incident in which a witness is assaulted or murdered heightens the climate of fear and mistrust—the sense that the law either can't or won't protect ordinary people.

On October 13, 2004, a year before he was shot while returning home from work, John Dowery was still electronically shackled to his house. Sometime after 3 p.m. that day, he looked out his front window and saw his friend James Wise coming up the street. Dowery and Wise, whom everyone called Jay, shared a love of basketball—and of heroin. Today Jay was with a younger man Dowery didn't recognize. They stopped outside the chain-link fence around Dowery's front yard. Jay called to Dowery, then came up to the door. He seemed nervous. He wanted Dowery's advice.

Jay said the other man had a gun. They were planning to rob an old drug dealer named Reds, who operated from a vacant lot a few doors down. Dowery told him it

was a bad idea. At 40, Jay was no innocent, but neither was he an experienced stickup artist. Even if the two men could pull off the robbery, stickup boys in East Baltimore don't usually live long: On the street, robbing a dealer is a capital offense. "I told him basically not to do it," Dowery would later say. "But he ain't listen."

Dowery looked on from his front door as the two men walked down the street and entered the "cut" where Reds worked. He watched a flock of dope fiends suddenly flee the alley, like ducks flushed from the reeds. Seconds later, Reds darted out too. Then Jay and his partner emerged and raced down the street.

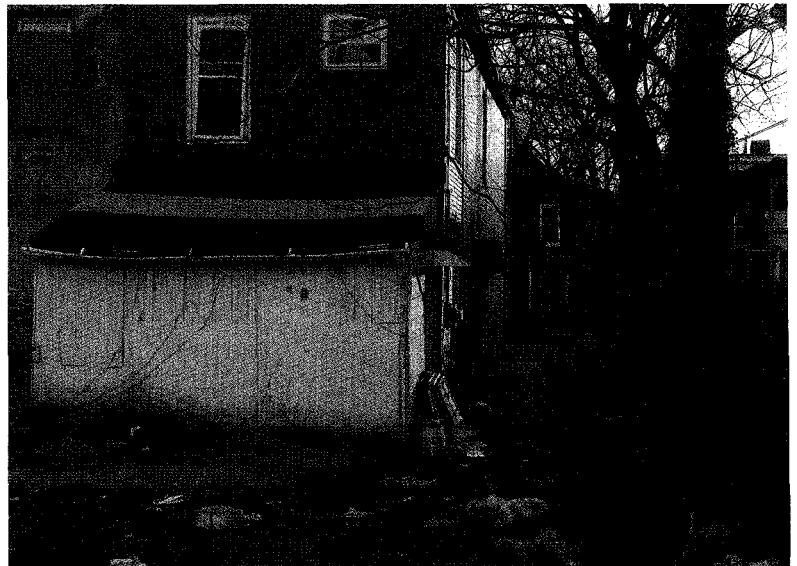
The two had timed their escape poorly. Sauntering up the street just then was Tracy Love, an athletic 20-year-old with cornrows and a meticulously trimmed beard and mustache, whom everyone knew as "Boo-Boo." Prosecutors later alleged that Boo-Boo oversaw the Bartlett Avenue drug operation. Jay and his accomplice brushed right past him. As Dowery watched, Boo-Boo pivoted and began to follow them down the hill.

Fifteen minutes later, Dowery heard the wail of police sirens and the *thump-thump* of a helicopter overhead. Boo-Boo strode back up Bartlett with his younger half-brother, Tamall Parker, who went by "Moo-Moo." "I got that motherfucker, six times in the chest," Dowery later recalled Boo-Boo shouting—ostensibly to his crew down the street, but loudly enough that anyone out on the block could hear. "Next time, one of y'all gonna do it. I'm tired of doing this shit."

According to police and prosecutors, this is what happened after Jay and his partner, a man police would identify as Joseph Bassett, robbed Reds and left Bartlett Avenue: Boo-Boo went to find Moo-Moo. They got into a white Lexus with sparkling chrome hubcaps and began cruising the neighborhood, hunting for Jay and Bassett. Unaware they were being pursued, Jay and Bassett met up with a couple of prostitutes a few blocks away. Jay knew one of them, Doris Dickerson. He told her about the robbery and offered her drugs. She said she would catch up with him in a minute, and walked into an alley. Bassett also left for a few minutes. Just as Doris and Jay were about to meet back up, at the corner of Bonaparte and Robb, Boo-Boo and Moo-Moo spotted Jay. Boo-Boo let Moo-Moo out of the car, then drove around the corner and waited. Moo-Moo tugged the hood of his sweatshirt up around his face, approached Jay, and pulled out a 9-mm handgun. He opened up, firing at least 13 times. The bullets punched holes in Jay's chest and abdomen; at least one smashed into his skull.

James Sylvester Wise Jr. was dead—the 229th murder of the year in a city that would rack up 278 by the end of December. Although 10 people called 911 to report the shooting, many refused to give their names. Six told the emergency operators that they did not want to talk to the

police when they arrived. One caller, John Craddock, said he had seen a man running down the street and jumping into a white Lexus. He could not see the man's face, but he thought he could make out part of the license plate—a blue-and-white temporary tag with the numbers 3, 4, and 9. Police dispatchers put out a description of the car, but to no avail. Officers canvassed the block but turned up no

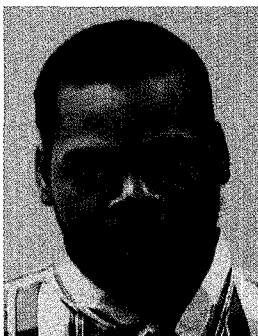
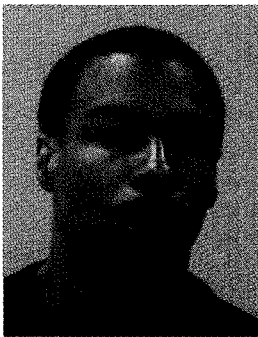
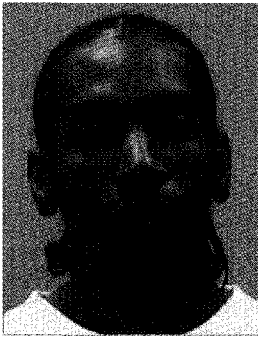


JOHN DOWERY'S BACKYARD, where he was shot in October 2005

additional witnesses or information. None of the three who knew the most about the killing—Dowery, Bassett, or Dickerson—came forward.

A man gunned down on a busy street. No identifying witnesses; no suspects. In this, James Wise's murder was typical. Colonel Frederick Bealefeld III, Baltimore's chief of detectives, says the police used to be able to rely on people's consciences and sense of civic duty to generate leads in murder investigations. But today, few witnesses are willing to offer information, even anonymously. "How hard is it for someone to get on the phone and say ... 'The guy who shot up this block—it is wrong, here's who that person is?'" Bealefeld asks. "Yet we don't get a ton of those kinds of calls. And if we graphed it out, if we tracked it over the years, you would see a very clear decline."

A 26-year veteran of the force and the grandson of a cop, Bealefeld has seen these changes firsthand. His grandfather walked a beat on Greenmount Avenue, not far from Bartlett. In 30 years with the department, he fired his gun exactly once in the line of duty. "No way he could walk that beat and do that now," Bealefeld says. "He took it for granted that the community respected him. Today's police can't take that for granted." By the time Bealefeld joined the force, in 1980, things had become much more dangerous for both the police and the citizens of

**FROM TOP:**

John Dowery Jr., James S. Wise Jr., Joseph Bassett

Baltimore. But during the '80s, working narcotics, he could still find confidential informants with relative ease. Over time, that too started to change.

Bealefeld says he does not want to underestimate the fear people feel on the streets, or their lack of trust in the law. But he thinks witness intimidation has also become a cover for indifference. "How do I separate your intransigence to take part in a civic responsibility, and a moral responsibility, from your alleged fear?" he asks, the anger rising in his voice. "I am not doing it, because I am afraid"—that is easy to say. You may not be doing it because you are a jerk and don't care about anybody but yourself and have no love for your fellow man."

Bealefeld is right that disentangling fear from other factors is not easy. But when I spoke with people in the blocks near where James Wise was murdered, it was the fear that was most palpable. "Round here it's not a good idea to talk to the police," Jacob Smith, a thoughtful 13-year-old walking home from school in East Baltimore, told me. "People, they like, if they know you talk to the police, they don't be around you. And if people talk on them and they get locked up, their friends come up on you and hurt you or something." (The ostracism and retaliation he spoke of got wide airing as a plotline last season in HBO's *The Wire*, set in Baltimore

and created by David Simon, a former crime reporter, and Ed Burns, a former police officer: A teenager thought by his peers to have snitched was beaten, and eventually his house was firebombed.)

All over Baltimore, whenever I asked people about cooperating with the law, I got the same response. "Why would you talk to the police? All you are doing is putting a label on yourself," said Barry Nelson, a 42-year-old part-time handyman who was waiting for a meal from a charity the day I met him. "They ain't going to be back to protect you after you done told on some cats." Randolph Jones, a retiree who was sweeping leaves from the sidewalk in front of his house in Northwest Baltimore, said he would call the police if something happened on *his* block. But the drug dealing and shootings on the next block over? He won't pick up the phone. Jones said the police try, but as soon as they arrest one corner boy, another moves in. "You got to live here, and the police can't do much," he

said. "You don't want to end up like that family in East Baltimore, the Dawsons."

The Dawsons come up in almost every conversation about reluctant witnesses in Baltimore. Angela Dawson had tried to shoo drug dealers away from the sidewalk outside the East Baltimore row house where she lived with her husband, Carnell, and their five children. She had frequently called the police. The dealers decided to strike back. In October 2002, the Dawsons' house was firebombed. Angela Dawson and all her children were killed in the blaze; Carnell Dawson died in the hospital a week later. A drug dealer named Darrell Brooks was convicted of the crime and is serving life without parole. But the sentence has done little to reassure potential witnesses. More than four years later, the Dawsons still haunt the city.

John Dowery knew Boo-Boo and Moo-Moo had shot someone; he prayed that it wasn't Jay, that it was the other guy. But the next day's newspaper confirmed his fear about his friend. Jay's death shook Dowery. But it also made him more determined to get his life back on track. And in the tragedy of his friend's murder, Dowery sensed opportunity. If he told the police what he knew about the killing, perhaps he could get a lighter sentence on his gun charge. On the other hand, talking was dangerous: If Boo-Boo and Moo-Moo found out, they might come after him or his family. So Dowery struggled with the decision. A day went by, then a week. Then he picked up the phone and called his public defender.

On October 27, Dowery, along with his lawyer and the prosecutor handling his gun charge, met with Michael Baier, the Baltimore homicide detective assigned to Jay's murder. Dowery told Baier what he knew about the killing. He also said that Boo-Boo and Moo-Moo, who were still hanging around Bartlett, had ditched their distinctive white Lexus. His statement provided a crucial break in the case.

Another break came the following week, when Joseph Bassett, Jay's accomplice, was busted selling heroin to undercover cops. With his long rap sheet, Bassett knew he was in trouble. He tried offering up an illegal .32 he kept at home, in the hope that the officers would let him go in exchange for getting the gun off the street. When that failed, he said he might know something about a murder on Bonaparte. The officers brought Bassett downtown to homicide, where he told Baier about robbing Reds. He also said he had seen two men in a white Lexus circling the block, and that he saw the car stop and a man get out and shoot Jay. Baier showed him a photo lineup. Bassett identified Tracy Love as the driver of the car and Tamall Parker as the shooter.

Parker and Love were picked up two days later. Baier had several other pieces of evidence: The two suspects'

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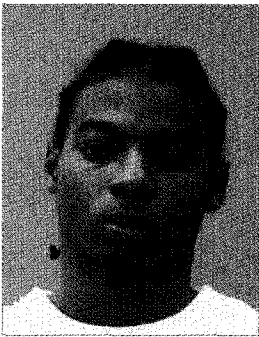
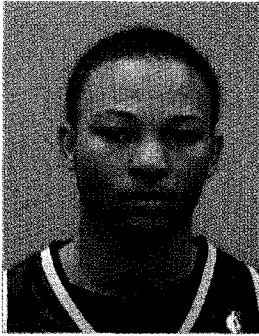
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FROM TOP:

Tracy Love, Tamall Parker

mother had recently returned to the dealership a white Lexus with the temporary license tag 38491L. Video from a warehouse surveillance camera near the murder scene had captured what appeared to be a white Lexus circling the block in the minutes before Jay was killed. An analysis of Love's cell phone records determined that the phone had not left East Baltimore that day, a finding that directly contradicted Love and Parker's alibi: They said they had spent the day in their mother's hair salon, in West Baltimore.

Baier did not have a confession or a murder weapon, however. So at trial, a lot would depend on the testimony of Dowery and Bassett—convicted felons who had come forward at least in part because they were facing charges themselves. Eventually they would be joined by a third witness, also in trouble with the law: Doris Dickerson, picked up for prostitution, told police that she was heading toward Jay when she heard shots. She saw Jay fall to the ground and Moo-Moo run away. She too identified Parker as the killer from a photo lineup.

Witnesses of this sort would once have made a prosecutor blanch. Now, they are usually all prosecutors have. One problem with such witnesses is that defense attorneys can use their records to attack their credibility. The fewer witnesses the state has and the more a defense attorney expects to be able to discredit them, the more likely she is to advise her client against a plea bargain. This means more cases go to trial, at significant expense to the state. And at trial, there is a decent chance—in Baltimore, about 50 percent in a nonfatal shooting, and 38 percent in a murder—that the defendant will walk.

Witnesses in the drug trade are also highly susceptible to being coerced into changing their stories or not showing up in court. If a witness goes missing, his prior statements generally aren't admissible. And a witness who "backs up"—legal slang for recanting—can create doubt, including reasonable doubt, in the minds of jurors.

Not surprisingly, defense attorneys have a different take. Elizabeth Julian, Baltimore's chief public defender, believes the problems of witness intimidation are overstated. She told me that the real issue is police tactics that encourage suspects to lie about their knowledge of other crimes, and she pointed out that it is perfectly legal for police to mislead potential witnesses into thinking they won't have to testify in court. "If you are being asked, and you are getting a 'Get Out of Jail Free' card tonight,

people take it. That's human nature," she says. In her view, many witnesses who back up are telling the truth on the stand. It's their initial statements that were false—either outright fabrications or some mixture of fact and rumor. Julian jokes that the word on the street, rather than "Stop snitching," ought to be "Stop lying."

As it happened, Dowery decided to become a witness just as witness intimidation in the city was about to explode into a national story. The spark was an underground DVD titled *Stop Fucking Snitching* that began circulating in Baltimore in November 2004. In it Rodney Thomas, a rapper known locally as Skinny Suge, talks about what he thinks should happen to informants: "To all you snitches and rats ... I hope you catch AIDS in your mouth, and your lips the first thing to die, yo bitch." The DVD also includes numerous segments in which young men on the street rail against snitches.

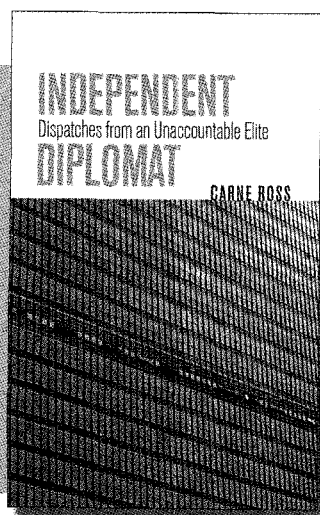
In its subject matter, the DVD was more evolution than revolution. The slogan "Stop snitching" had been around since at least 1999, when it was popularized by the Boston rapper Tangg da Juice. The video would have remained a local curiosity except for one thing: It includes a cameo by Carmelo Anthony, a Baltimore native who became an NBA star with the Denver Nuggets. Anthony appears in only six of the film's 108 minutes, and spends most of that time poking fun at a former coach and a rival player. As he later told *The Baltimore Sun*, "I was back on my block, chillin'. I was going back to show love to everybody, thinking it was just going to be on the little local DVD, that it was just one of my homeboys recording." But his celebrity, combined with the DVD's charged subject matter, created a sensation.

For Baltimore's police, prosecutors, and judges, eager to raise awareness about witness intimidation, *Stop Fucking Snitching* was a gift. "Think how bold criminals must be to make a DVD," Baltimore Circuit Judge John M. Glynn told the local press. "It shows that threatening snitches has become mainstream." Patricia Jessamy, the state's attorney for Baltimore, had hundreds of copies made and distributed them to politicians and the national media. The publicity helped her win passage of a tougher witness-intimidation law, one the Maryland legislature had voted down the year before. The police department made a show of arresting the DVD's stars, including a man accused of carrying out contract killings, and created its own video, *Keep Talking*, to encourage future witnesses to come forward.

Stop Fucking Snitching was produced by Rodney Bethea, a 33-year-old barber and entrepreneur. I met him in his small West Baltimore store, One Love Underground, which pulls double duty as a barbershop and a boutique from which he sells his own line of urban fashions. Bethea told me the authorities and media had

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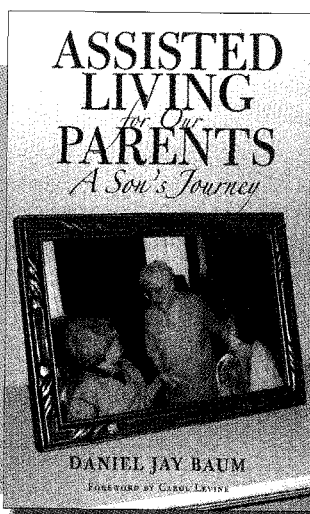
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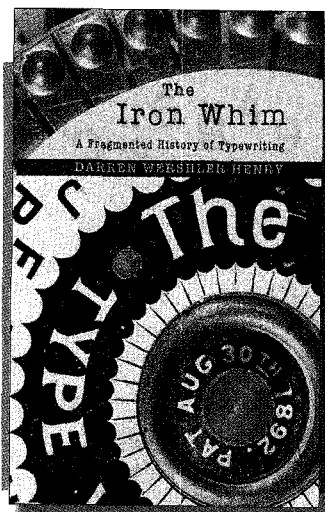
—RORY STEWART, AUTHOR OF *THE PLACES IN BETWEEN*



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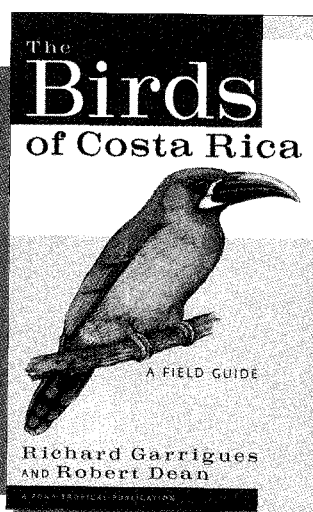
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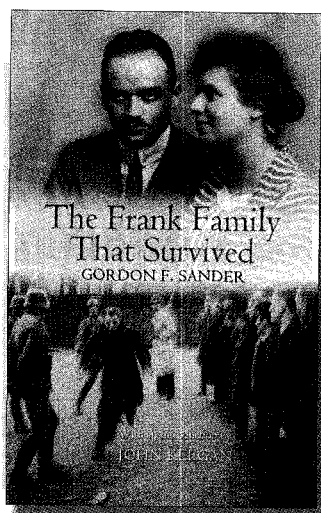
—LARRY MCMURTRY



TRAVEL

"The appearance of this new, compact guide to the birds of Costa Rica should spur even more international birders to come to this avian paradise. I congratulate author Richard Garrigues and artist Robert Dean on a job well done."

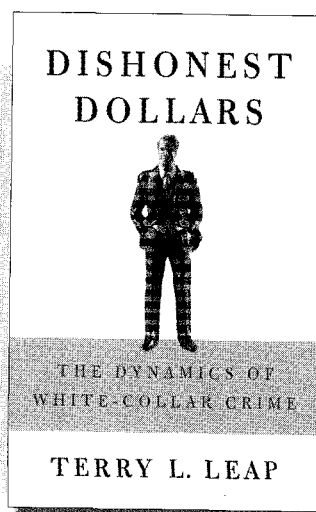
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BUSINESS

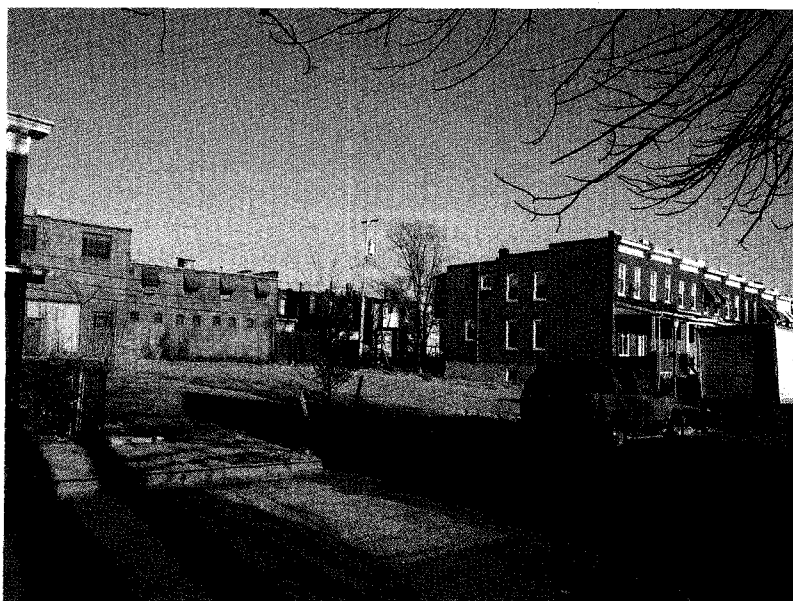
"Terry Leap's practical book addresses all aspects of the problem, from the mental makeup of the criminal to the attitudes of the public toward white-collar offenders. Comprehensive and compelling, it will appeal to the general public as well as professionals."

—DR. STANTON E. SAMENOW,
AUTHOR OF *INSIDE THE CRIMINAL MIND*
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misinterpreted the DVD. It was not intended to encourage violence against witnesses, he said; he had simply set out to make a freestyle documentary, and snitching happened to emerge as a major theme. He also said that the term *snitch* has a very specific meaning on the streets and in the video. "They are referring to people that are engaged in illegal activities, making a profit from it, and then when it comes time for the curtains to close—you do the crime, you do the time—now no one wants to go to jail," he told me, pulling on his goatee. "That is considered a snitch. The old lady that lives on the block that call the police because guys are selling drugs in front of her house, she's not a snitch, because she is what would be considered a civilian."

Bethea believes there is a double standard—and perhaps a tinge of racism—in law enforcement's criticism of



THE "CUT" where the drug dealer Reds operated

the "Stop snitching" culture. "When you think about it, I mean, who likes a snitch?" he said. "The government don't like a snitch. Their word for it is *treason*. What is the penalty for treason?" He pointed out that the police have their own code of silence, and that officers who break it by reporting police misconduct are stigmatized in much the same way as those who break the code of silence on the street.

Bethea's argument has a certain elegance. But the distinction he draws between the drug dealer who flips and the civilian who is just trying to get dealers off her stoop has ceased to mean much. Just ask the Dawsons. Or Edna McAbier, a community activist who tried to clean up drugs in her North Baltimore neighborhood. The local chapter of the Bloods considered blowing her head off with a shotgun but settled for firebombing her house, in January 2005—not long after *Stop Fucking Snitching*

made news. McAbier escaped with her life, and her house was not badly damaged; those responsible received long prison sentences. But though the gang members didn't succeed in killing her, they did silence her: She left Baltimore out of fear for her safety. And the city got the message: If you break the code, you are in danger—even if you are a "civilian."

By the time of the McAbier firebombing, John Dowery was starting to reap the rewards of his decision to testify in the state's prosecution of Tracy Love and Tamall Parker. His own trial had been postponed indefinitely. He had been released from home confinement, his drug-treatment program was going well, and he had started working.

So far, Baier had kept Dowery's name out of the investigative records, referring to him simply as "a Federal Suspect" and "the Source" so the state would not have to disclose him as a witness until closer to the trial date. He had also deferred taking a taped statement from Dowery, out of concern for his safety. These were sound precautions: On several occasions, prosecutors have intercepted "kites"—letters from a defendant, smuggled out of jail—detailing the prosecution's witness list and instructing friends or relatives to "talk" to those on it. But Baier could not keep Dowery's name a secret forever. Sooner or later, the government would have to tell defense lawyers that he was going to testify. In the meantime, suspicions about Dowery had already begun to circulate in the neighborhood. "Somebody approached me saying 'Yeah, you snitching on us,'" he told Baier.

The case against Love and Parker languished. A trial was set for early April 2005 and then postponed until May, and then postponed again, and then again—seven times in all. In Baltimore, as in most major U.S. cities, the large number of cases and the shortage of judges, courtrooms, and lawyers make such delays common. Some cases have been postponed more than 30 times and have dragged on for more than five years. And each postponement increases the risk that witnesses who were cooperative will cease to be so—that they will move and leave no forwarding address, change their stories, genuinely forget facts, or turn up dead. "The defense attorneys play this game," says Brian Matulonis, the lieutenant in charge of Baltimore's Homicide Operations Squad. "If the witness is not there, they are ready to go. If the witness is there, they ask for a postponement."

On May 20, 2005, Baier finally took a taped statement from Dowery. It was delivered to defense lawyers in June. Soon afterward, Dowery got a phone call from Love.

"That's fucked, man. Why you gonna do me like that?" the defendant seethed.

"I said I didn't know what he was talking about," Dowery would tell the jurors during the trial. "I was testifying

the whole time. But I just act like I didn't know what he was talking about."

A few weeks later, Love called Dowery again. "He like, 'Man, other guy, he say he ain't gonna testify. What about you?'"

Dowery again played dumb. "I say, 'Man, he lied. I don't know whatcha talking about. You cool.'" Love seemed satisfied. "It was, like, a friendlier conversation the second time," Dowery would testify.

Dowery was nervous about the calls and about becoming known in the neighborhood as a snitch. But he didn't believe he was in immediate danger. The trial kept getting pushed back. Summer gave way to fall. Then came the morning when two men met him at his front door with a gun.

One of Jessamy's primary weapons against witness intimidation is her office's witness-assistance program. Unlike the federal witness-protection program—the one most people know about from the movies—Baltimore's program can't provide marshals to guard witnesses around the clock for years. It can't offer witnesses a new identity in some distant city. Instead, the

most on or near Bartlett. This included many of his nine children. In a neighborhood of absentee fathers, Dowery doted on his kids. Two of them lived with him and Yolanda. And he tried to stay involved in the lives of the others.

Eventually the witness coordinators prevailed upon Yolanda, who in turn convinced Dowery that they should leave. After less than two weeks in a hotel, Dowery, Yolanda, and their five-year-old daughter moved to a house outside the city. Most of his relatives remained in the old neighborhood.

The trial of Tracy Love and Tamall Parker for the murder of James Wise began on January 26, 2006, in the cramped courtroom of Baltimore Circuit Judge Sylvester Cox. During opening arguments, Christopher Noshier, the boyish assistant state's attorney prosecuting the case, appeared confident. Although Judge Cox had barred any reference to the shooting attack on Dowery, ruling that the defendants had not been definitively linked to the incident, Dowery would be allowed to testify about the phone calls from Love. For Noshier, this was a coup: Jurors can be instructed to interpret a threat against a witness as "consciousness of guilt." Evidence of

Witnesses so commonly miss court dates in Baltimore, whether from fear or irresponsibility, that prosecutors have resorted to arresting them just to compel their appearance.

Baltimore program—run by a staff of two, with an annual budget of \$500,000—tries to get witnesses out of harm's way by putting them in low-budget hotels that serve as temporary safe houses. The average stay is 90 days. The program also helps witnesses relocate permanently, generally within Maryland, providing a security deposit or first month's rent, moving costs, and vouchers for food and transportation. If necessary, it helps with job placement and drug treatment.

In most cases, this is enough to keep witnesses safe. Few Baltimore drug gangs have much reach beyond a couple of blocks, let alone outside the city. Still, many witnesses refuse the help. Almost a third of the 255 witnesses whom prosecutors referred to the program last year did not even come to an initial meeting. Of the 176 who did, only 36 entered safe housing. "Many of these people have never left their neighborhood," says Heather Courtney, a witness-assistance coordinator. "A lot of people can't handle it. They just can't be out of that neighborhood. That is all they know."

Even after the shooting, Dowery did not want to leave East Baltimore. He had spent his whole life there. His entire family—aunts, uncles, cousins—lived nearby,

intimidation can also help juries understand why witnesses may back up on the stand.

Noshier had another reason to be confident: He knew that all of his witnesses would show. John Craddock, the man who had caught three numbers of the Lexus's license plate, had never wavered during the long pretrial process. Bassett, Jay's accomplice, had been convicted of his drug charges and was serving a seven-year sentence, so he wasn't going anywhere. And both Dowery and Doris Dickerson had remained cooperative.

In this respect, the trial was unusual. Witnesses so commonly miss court dates in Baltimore, whether from fear or irresponsibility, that Jessamy's office has resorted to arresting them just to compel their appearance. Jessamy acknowledges that arresting witnesses is hardly ideal—it tends to make them hostile to the prosecution and more likely to back up, and it further sours police-community relations. "But if you've done everything you can to get them to come voluntarily, then you do what you have to do," she says.

That afternoon, Dowery took the stand. He had always been skinny, but in the witness box he looked gaunt. His long, loose-fitting black shirt covered a colostomy bag, a

result of the October 2005 shooting. Dowery spoke in a deep, soft voice as Noshier walked him through the events he witnessed on the day James Wise was murdered.

As he began his testimony, a commotion electrified the hallway outside. Several friends of Boo-Boo and Moo-Moo tried to rush into the courtroom carrying cell phones, which they held near their thighs, fingers resting on the camera buttons. Detective Baier was also in the hall, awaiting his turn to testify. He spotted the cell phones and stepped in front of the men, barring their path to the door. "Whoa, you can't come in here," he told them. "It's a closed courtroom." This was not true, but it kept the men from entering. Then, for laughs, Baier took out his own cell phone and took pictures of them.

Incidents of intimidation at the courthouse are no longer aberrations. Gang members sometimes line the courthouse steps, forming a gantlet that witnesses and jurors must walk through. Family members of defendants have come to court wearing STOP SNITCHING T-shirts and hats. In a Pittsburgh case last year, a key (though hostile) prosecution witness came to court in STOP SNITCHING gear. He was ejected because his garb was considered intimidating to other witnesses, and without his testi-

he had signed, in which he had identified Parker as the shooter, Bassett said that Baier "basically picked the dude out for me." What about his taped statement? He had been forced to make it, he said. "I gave them the plot of the story; they put their own characters with it."

The jury heard from other prosecution witnesses: Craddock talked about seeing the Lexus and part of the license tag. Baier testified about the investigation, stating that he had not coerced Bassett or helped him pick photos from the lineup. A telecommunications expert testified about the location of Love's cell phone. Video from the warehouse surveillance camera was shown to the jury. The defense put on no witnesses of its own. But after two days of deliberation, the jury announced that it could not reach a unanimous verdict. Judge Cox was forced to declare a mistrial.

At first, the prosecutors planned to retry the case. But over the summer, the federal government decided to take over. (With Dowery's cooperation, it had already been working on a case against Love, Parker, and James Dinkins, a man police believe was involved in Dowery's shooting.) In late August, Parker, Love, and

Dowery was nervous about becoming known as a snitch. But he didn't think he was in immediate danger. Then two men met him at his door with a gun.

mony, the district attorney dropped the charges. At the close of a Baltimore trial two years ago, jurors were so frightened of the defendants and of gang members in the gallery that the forewoman refused to read the guilty verdict aloud; so did another juror asked to do so by the judge. The judge eventually read the verdict herself and, as a precaution, had sheriff's deputies accompany the jurors out of the building.

Dowery endured a withering cross-examination, but he escaped the stand largely undamaged. Noshier's two other eyewitnesses did not. Dickerson developed sudden memory loss, claiming not to recall key details of what she had seen. Then Love's lawyer got her to admit she was probably high on heroin when the shooting took place. As for Bassett, he backed up right away. "First, I would like to say I don't appreciate being here against my will," he said in a high, squeaky voice that seemed incongruous coming from a man of his bulk. He went on to say that he never saw Jay after the robbery, never saw anyone shoot Jay, never saw a white Lexus at the end of Bonaparte, and never told Baier that he had seen any of these things. When Noshier showed him the photo lineup

Dinkins were indicted on federal charges of conspiracy to distribute heroin. As of this writing, the trial is scheduled to begin in late March.

Federal prosecutions are one method cities are using to combat witness intimidation. A law passed by Congress last December explicitly makes witness intimidation in a state case grounds for federal prosecution. Rod Rosenstein, the U.S. attorney for Maryland, says the federal government has a big advantage over the states in breaking through the code of silence: leverage. Federal sentencing guidelines provide for long prison terms and, unlike the state system, do not allow for probation or parole. "We don't appeal to their sense of civility and morality," Rosenstein says. "We get a hammer over their heads. They realize that cooperating is the only way they can get out from under these hefty federal sentences."

Some states are looking to bring their laws into line with federal practices. The Maryland law Jessamy helped pass elevates witness intimidation from a misdemeanor to a felony punishable by a minimum of five years. It also allows prosecutors to introduce a witness's prior statements even if the witness isn't at the trial, if they can provide "clear and convincing evidence" that the defendant

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was responsible for the witness's absence. Still, Jessamy isn't satisfied. The new law excludes child-abuse and domestic-violence cases. And rarely can prosecutors obtain the kind of evidence of intimidation it requires. Even when they can, Jessamy says, trying to persuade judges to apply the law "is like pouring water on a stone."

Cities are also pushing to increase funding for witness assistance. The federal law passed in December allows the U.S. attorney general to dispense grants to states for witness protection. But Congress appropriated only \$20 million annually for these grants through 2010. By contrast, a bill that Representative Elijah Cummings of Maryland introduced two years ago would have provided \$90 million annually to support state witness-assistance programs; that bill died in committee. Since the start of the new congressional

community is never ready? Many inner-city neighborhoods have no community. The institutions that once held them together—the churches, the associations, the businesses—are shells of what they were, if they exist at all.

For Dowery, the mistrial was unnerving. Yet in some ways it was better than a guilty verdict. He was still planning to testify for the federal government against Love, Parker, and Dinkins. This would further postpone his gun case. In addition, as a federal witness, he began receiving some token financial assistance from the FBI.

Dowery's family would visit him in the suburbs. Still, he missed them, and he missed his friends. So he occasionally sneaked back to the old neighborhood for a day or two, usually staying with his mother and trying to keep a low profile. In the spring, he proudly watched his two eldest sons graduate from high school. And he didn't want to skip Thanksgiving at his aunt's house, on Bartlett Avenue. "He was tired of hiding out," his aunt, Joyce Garner, told me.

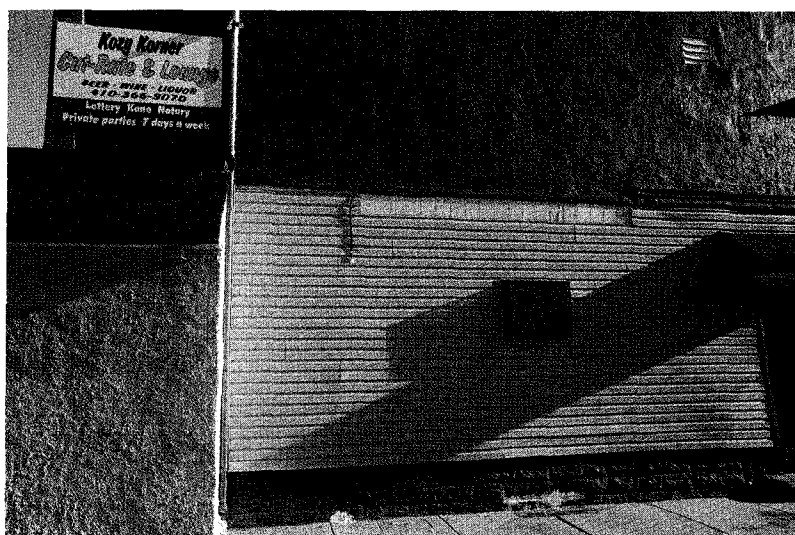
On Thanksgiving night, more than 20 members of Dowery's family gathered for a feast. Dowery was in a good mood, reminiscing about old times. Garner remembers that he came to talk to her as she was cooking. She asked if he was worried about being back in the neighborhood. "He just talked about the Lord to us and gave us a big hug and said, 'God's got it,'" she recalled. Toward the end of dinner, Dowery excused himself. He wanted to run across the street to buy a pack of cigarettes and have a beer.

The sign over its beige stucco facade calls the Kozy Korner a "Cut-Rate & Lounge." Two doors separate the bar from the street. The first opens onto a grungy vestibule where a cashier sells beer and liquor from behind a bulletproof window. The second is locked; customers must be buzzed through. Once inside, they are greeted by a dark, narrow room. A Baltimore Ravens poster is affixed to one wall. A rendering of the Last Supper, with a black Jesus and black disciples, decorates the other. Three video gambling machines flash and hum.

When Dowery arrived, a dozen other patrons were packed into the space. He recognized one of them: a former girlfriend called Toot. They chatted inside the doorway while he smoked and sipped a beer. Just after 10 o'clock, the door opened, and two men entered. This time Dowery's sixth sense—the feeling that had told him to turn around on his porch that morning a year earlier—failed him. One of the men drew a gun, pointed it at Dowery's head, and fired. Then the other did the same. This time, the doctors couldn't save him.

And although the bar was crowded, no one has come forward to say they saw a thing. It's just another homicide in inner-city America, with no suspects, and no witnesses. ■

Jeremy Kahn is a writer based in Washington, D.C.



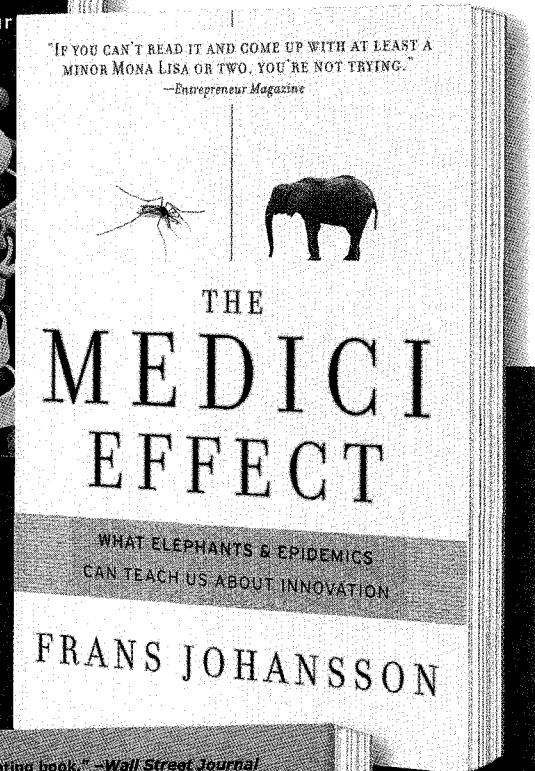
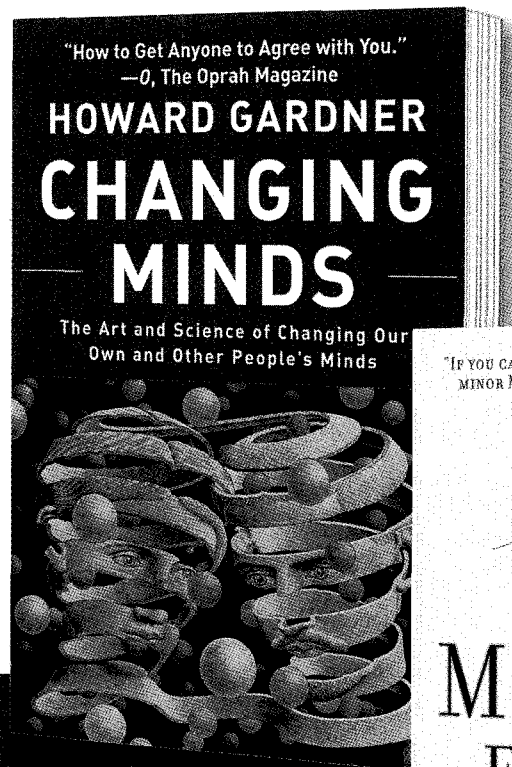
THE KOZY KORNER

session, in January, several bills to strengthen the protection of witnesses in state cases have been introduced; as of this writing, they are all still in committee.

Federal prosecutions, new laws, more money—these are the blunt instruments of policy-makers. They might chip away at the edges of the problem. But to really reduce witnesses' reluctance to participate in the judicial process will require something beyond the abilities of cops and courts: a cultural transformation in America's inner cities. In Philadelphia, Boston, and Washington, D.C., authorities have tried to prohibit the sale of STOP SNITCHING clothing (they succeeded in Washington). But there is no indication that criminalizing a fashion and political statement will alter the underlying sentiment. Leonard Hamm, a long-serving Baltimore police officer who returned to head the city's department in 2004 after an eight-year absence, sees the problem this way: "I think that the community is going to have to get sick and tired of the shootings and the killings and the memorial services. And all we can do as police is be there when they say they are ready." But what if the

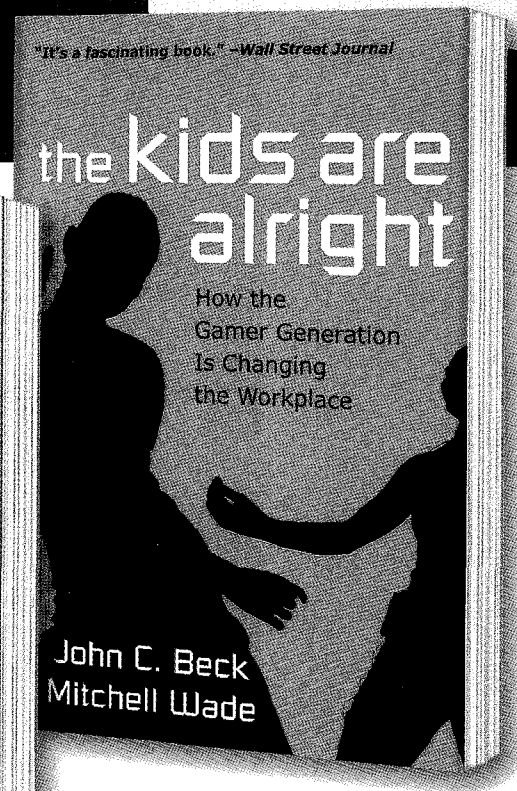
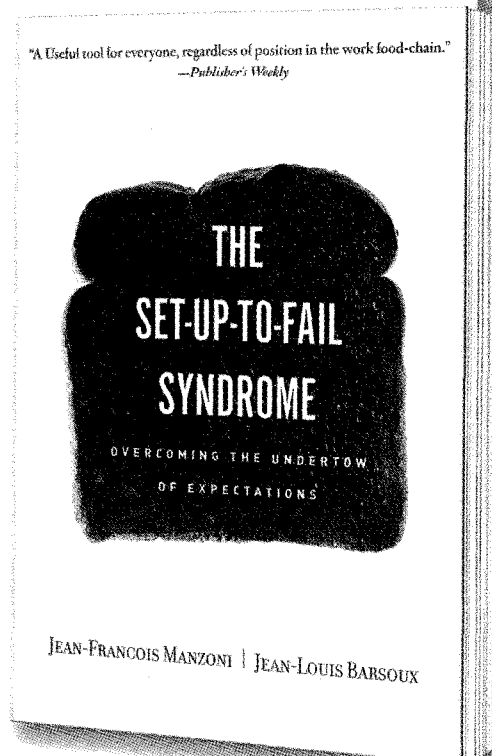


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TRAVELS

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DOWN THE STRETCH

Racehorses barrel through a turn at the historic Saratoga Race Course. Wayne Curtis tours Saratoga Springs in "Off to the Races."

© ADAM COGNARESE, NYRA'S OFFICIAL TRACK PHOTOGRAPHER

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THE ATLANTIC | APRIL 2007

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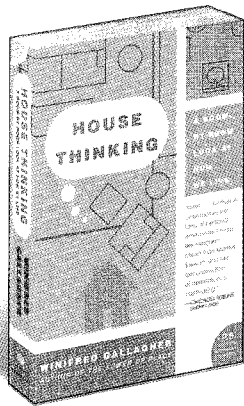
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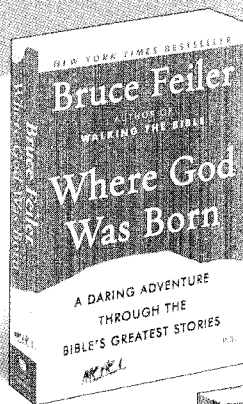
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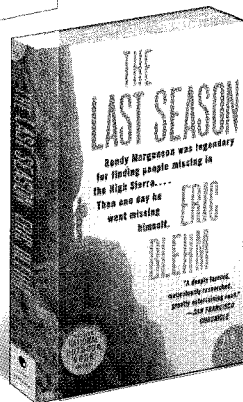
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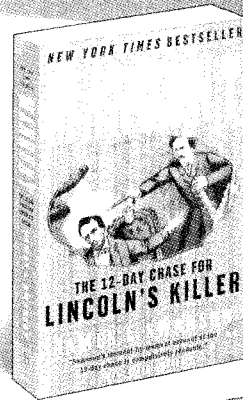
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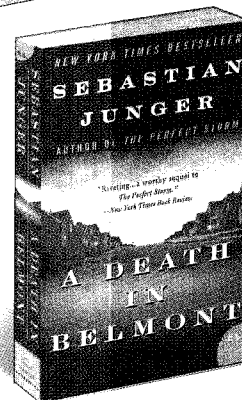
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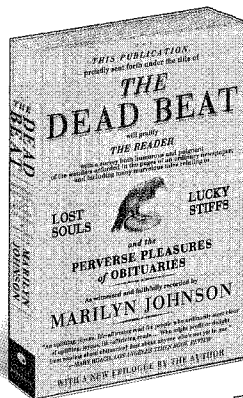


"A gripping page-turner ..."
—*Entertainment Weekly* (Grade: A)



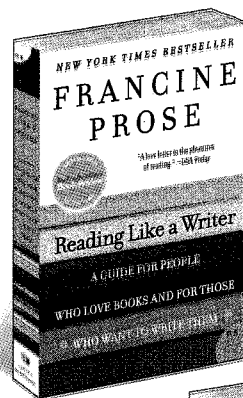
"Riveting ... reads like a novel."
—*New York Times Book Review*

THIS SPRING, GIVE YOURSELF SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT.

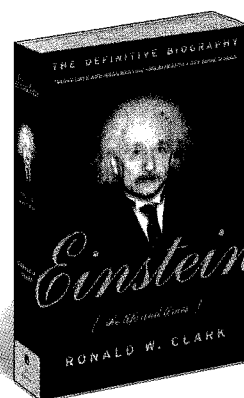


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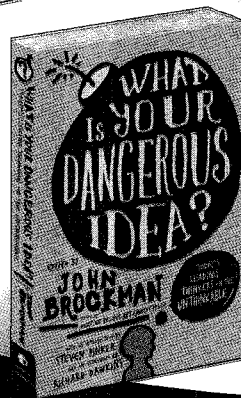
"A jewel of a companion ... engrossing ... daringly insightful and burst-out laughing funny."
—*Los Angeles Times*



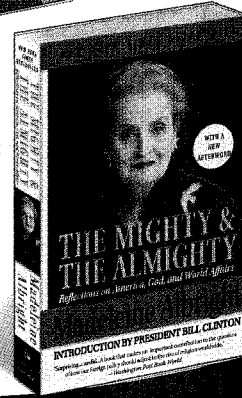
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EDITOR'S CHOICE

What to read this month

"Show the Dress"

BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

Gorgeously designed, handsomely bound, and abundantly illustrated with some of the best photography of the last century, this swank volume—with its 410 pages of sumptuously thick matte stock—has the look and impossible-to-read-in-bed heft of the highest-end coffee-table book. But *In Vogue* is a serious, sometimes minute chronicle of the 115-year history of *Vogue* magazine—or “The Bible,” as the fashion-afflicted call it.

Oddly, the authors, Norberto Angeletti and Alberto Oliva, who are magazine historians rather than *schmatte* scribes, begin by averring that “no book has yet recounted [the magazine’s] history,” and that theirs is one of the “few titles published about *Vogue*.” Although it’s true that theirs is the first comprehensive account of American *Vogue* (Georgina Howell wrote an unusually polished and intelligent history of British *Vogue*, the first of the at least 14 international editions and a magazine whose grace and stylishness in the 1920s through the ’50s often surpassed its parent), I can think of very few magazines that have been as widely and deeply probed.

Polly Devlin, for instance, wrote an excellent history of *Vogue* photography (Angeletti and Oliva obviously follow Devlin’s schema in their exploration of that subject, which is the focal point of this book); there’s a history of *Vogue* illustrations; there are even two histories of *Vogue* covers. Condé Montrose Nast—who bought the magazine in 1909, brilliantly reconceived it as the incontrovertible arbiter of taste and style to “the woman of fashion” and as the meeting ground of the well-born and the flashy, and directed it toward those ends until his death, in 1942—is the subject of what I reckon as one of

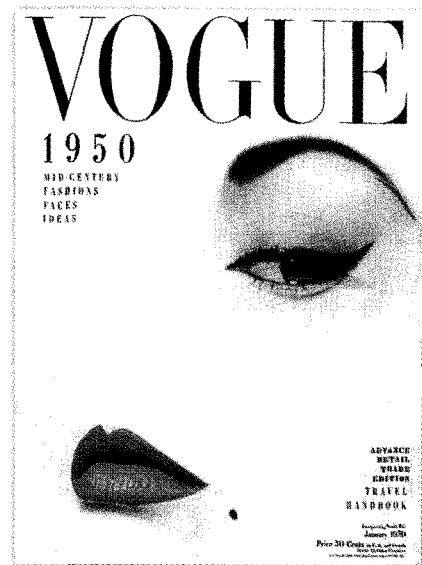
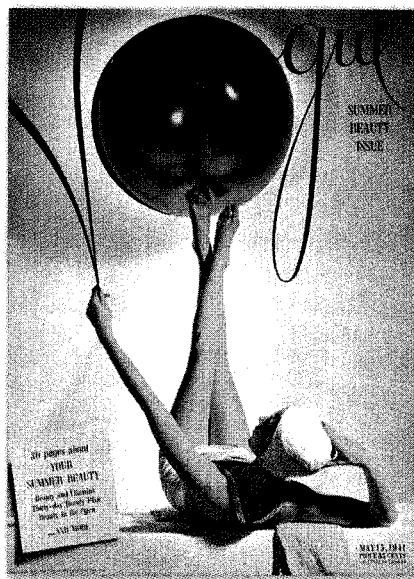
STRAIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY: John Rawlings’s crisp shot from the August 1942 *Vogue*

the two best biographies of an American magazine publisher (*The Man Who Was Vogue*, by Caroline Seebohm). All of the major photographers in the magazine's history—including Edward Steichen, Irving Penn, and Richard Avedon—have been scrutinized in at least one major book. *Vogue's* most illustrious art director, Alexander Liberman, is the subject of an exceptional biography (*Alex*, by Dodie Kazanjian and Calvin Tomkins) and of his stepdaughter's recently celebrated reminiscence (*Them*, by Francine du Plessix Gray).

The current creative director, Grace "The Cod" Coddington; a former fashion editor, Bettina Ballard, who covered the great, waning years of haute couture; and four of the past five editors in chief have written compelling memoirs or books about the fashion world. (Coddington, once a renowned model and editor at British *Vogue*, has noted of life at American *Vogue*, "You're either having dinner with 300 people or groveling on the floor with pins in your mouth.") She and her partner, the acclaimed hairstylist Didier Malige, have just published *The Catwalk Cats*, a winsomely revealing and chicly off-kilter account of their lives with their, uh, five cats. Those creatures, "bouncing between Paris, London, and Milan," must be leading the most glamorous feline lives in world history.)

The *Vogue* years of the magazine's most famous deputy editor, Carmel Snow, who was later the editor of *Harper's Bazaar*, are treated at length in her memoir and in a recent biography, *A Dash of Daring* (which I reviewed in the July/August issue). The magazine's most flamboyant past editor—the loopy, loping, *jolie laide* Diana Vreeland—is the subject of two biographies, and the current editor, Anna Wintour, is dissected in a pretty trashy tell-all. Mary McCarthy analyzed *Vogue* with humorless bite, and Gay Talese, who described its editrixes as "a group of suave and wrinkle-proof women ... who can speak in italics and curse in French," sketched it with uncharacteristic smugness.

What accounts for this scrutiny?



THE FACE OF VOGUE: Covers from 1941 by Horst P. Horst (left) and 1950 by Erwin Blumenfeld (above)

For nearly a century, the magazine's cultural sway—perhaps even more than the content—has lent glamour to the enterprise. Soon after Nast acquired it, *Vogue* became the authoritative voice in high fashion—the most evanescent art form, as well as a formidable area of commerce—and has never relinquished that position. In fact, since Vreeland's reign, in the 1960s, *Vogue's* role and influence have in certain ways swelled. Until then, the magazine was content in its Olympian task of reporting trends and anointing "just the right coat, the smart shoe, the really elegant bag," as Edna Woolman Chase, the Quaker-born editor who had worked at the magazine from 1895 to 1951, put it in her charming but forgotten autobiography, *Always in Vogue* (1956). But now it helps shape and create fashion, as its editors—with antennae exquisitely sensitive to various avant-garde, sub-cultural, and even transgressive developments—collaborate with designers to create the clothes and the various looks the magazine seeks to promote.

Authority, however, has its downside, a fact of which Angeletti and Oliva are oblivious. Indeed, those looking for critical judgment—including an appraisal of the current *Vogue*—won't find it here. Although the authors assure us that they were granted editorial control and "encourag[ed] to write freely" (one wonders by whom), their book is very much a *Vogue* project, and its narrative of "The

Anna Wintour Era," which swallows up fully 30 percent of the volume, is perforce unrevealing and rah-rah.

More disappointing because less predictable is the authors' somewhat gingerly treatment of *Vogue's* past. An innovative magazine graphically and editorially—it was the first to print an image across a double page, the first to use a full-color photograph on the cover, and the first in America to run a "bleed" photograph (in which the picture runs to the page's edge; Angeletti and Oliva, who clearly like this sort of thing, fail to note this innovation)—*Vogue* was nevertheless, up to the Vreeland years (when it ran a bit too wild), constrained by its self-assigned role, which is clear when you compare it in the mid-1930s through the late '50s with its only competitor, *Harper's Bazaar*.

Snow, who left her post as Chase's deputy at *Vogue*, presided from 1933 to 1957 at "the *Bazaar*" (with her art director, Alexey Brodovitch, and her fashion editor, Vreeland, who after Snow's retirement would leave *Bazaar* to edit *Vogue*) over the most distinctive and inventive fashion magazine in history. With its varied, Bauhaus- and constructivist-influenced layouts containing the groundbreaking action photography of Martin Munkacsi, the meticulously balanced and corrected pioneering color photography of Louise Dahl-Wolfe, and the innovative work of the young Richard Avedon, *Bazaar* was

LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY HORST P. HORST. RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH BY ERWIN BLUMENFELD. BOTH ARE COURTESY OF THE CONDÉ NAST ARCHIVE, FROM IN VOGUE: THE MAN WHO WAS VOGUE, BY CAROLINE SEEBOHM, AND THEM, BY FRANCINE DU PLESSIX GRAY. BOTH ARE COURTESY OF THE CONDÉ NAST ARCHIVE, FROM IN VOGUE: THE MAN WHO WAS VOGUE, BY CAROLINE SEEBOHM, AND THEM, BY FRANCINE DU PLESSIX GRAY.

often daringly supreme during a crucial period in fashion history: the late, brilliant flowering of haute couture in the work of Dior (Snow famously hailed his spring 1947 collection as the "New Look") and, above all, Balenciaga (whom the magazine discerningly, aggressively, and at times almost solely championed), as well as the burgeoning of American high fashion in the designs of Charles James, Hattie Carnegie, and Claire McCardell (whose creations inspired some of Dahl-Wolfe's most exuberant work).

Vogue, astonishingly, had dismissed the work of Munkacsi—whose 1933 snap for *Bazaar* of a model running on the beach permanently altered and profoundly enlivened fashion photography (models had previously been elaborately posed and lighted in studios) and signaled the new verve of the magazine for which it was taken—and of Dahl-Wolfe, whose cool, formal perfectionism cleanly conveyed the buoyant ease of her models and their clothes. Chase pronounced Munkacsi's photographs merely "country girls jumping fences," and her art director thought that the 30-something Dahl-Wolfe, whose work would largely define the look of *Bazaar*, was too old. The high-flying Snow could take chances that the more rigid Chase wouldn't and—more important, given the role *Vogue* had arrogated—couldn't: As Ernestine Carter, the London *Sunday Times* fashion editor, put it, "Edna Chase was *Vogue's* creation, while *Harp-er's Bazaar* was Carmel's."

But in neglecting to assess the intense and creative rivalry between the two magazines—a rivalry that was fueled by Nast's and Chase's undying sense of Snow's treachery, and that shaped *Vogue's* sense of its style and mission—the authors distort a central period in the history of *Vogue* and of fashion. (By the way, ICP/Steidl has just published the definitive work on Munkacsi's work, **Martin Munkacsi**, featuring more than 300 photographs and exceptionally penetrating and detailed commentary.)

Strikingly but entirely appropriately, this fat history devotes essentially no attention to the reams of glossy print that *Vogue* has given over to reporting and probing the subject—clothes—to which the magazine dedicates itself. (Non-fashion pieces by fancy writers, almost always mediocre work, have regularly adorned its pages, but largely, it would seem, so that those contributions can be noted in books like this one; as a former art director said of one such writer decades ago, "She's like a piano player in a whorehouse. She may be a very good piano player, but nobody goes there to hear music.") You might expect fashion to be a great subject for sparkling, accessible criticism: It's a popular and tactile art form that sensitively reacts to (and has even at times engendered) cultural, technological, social, and economic forces both sweeping and minuscule; that possesses a highly devel-



IN VOGUE

by Norberto Angeletti
and Alberto Oliva

Rizzoli

oped set of techniques; and that holds a rich and complex history to which its practitioners continually respond. But not only has fashion failed to produce its own Mencken, M. F. K. Fisher, or Kael (and that the theorists in academe have embraced it as a trendy subject should extinguish all hope that it ever will); seldom does any fashion writer clearly define the essential qualities of a design or concretely convey the workings of cut and construction.

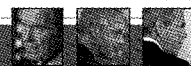
Then again, that's what fashion photography is supposed to do. And the really important history of *Vogue* is the interplay of clothes, femininity, and the camera—a history largely determined by fashion's enduring and defining tensions between art and commerce, between the lasting and the ephemeral.

"Show the dress." That was Chase's order, in a 1938 memo to photographers, and it summarized the magazine's workaday mission: Show to the cognoscenti how artfully (or not) Chanel's atelier has constructed a suit sleeve; show to the Manhattan socialite, who's on the fence about subjecting herself to the endless

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The Washington Post

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round of fittings for Chanel's spring models at Saks, how the suit will fit and how its fabric drifts over rather than clings to the body; and perhaps most important (in an era before prêt-à-porter), show to the sophisticated 35-year-old Kansas City clubwoman all the details her dressmaker will need to copy it.

Chase, echoing Nast, who seems to have spent a good part of his life issuing detailed critiques of photographs, declared that if showing the dress "can't be done with art, then art be damned." But in fact *Vogue's* requirements largely complemented the artistic direction that fashion photography was taking (or should have been taking), though it required Chase, Nast, and many of *Vogue's* photographers a long time to recognize fully and absorb the new medium's potential.

different, jaunty-yet-refined Chanel dresses his models frequently wore—clothes that reflected and helped create a new style of femininity.

"Every woman de Meyer photographs looks like a model," Nast told Steichen; "you make every model look like a woman." Still, in the 1920s and '30s at *Vogue*, Steichen's approach competed with photographic styles that favored elaborate lighting and overwrought sets and with the glamorous gauziness of Cecil Beaton. (At Snow's *Bazaar*, in contrast, the straight-photography style always reigned supreme.) And while *In Vogue*, with perhaps a dash of retrospective feminism, justly praises the charming brio with which socialite photographer Toni Frissell used the new high-speed Rolleiflex in the 1930s to capture a new kind of clothing on

astrigent, almost clinical photographs of the fall 1950 Paris collections. These iconic images—stripped down, hardened in the sharpness of their detail—balanced their austerity with a knowing, intimate engagement with the women modeling the designs.

Penn and my other favorite early postwar *Vogue* photographers—Rawlings and Norman Parkinson (who, although he mostly shot for British *Vogue*, photographed prolifically for and published a number of his most memorable images in its American counterpart; his neglect in this book is a major oversight)—all used their direct camera style to establish what Parkinson's subject Wenda Rogerson called a "witty underplay" with their models; their work in this period constitutes an admiring study of the intelligence, complexity, and humor of great feminine beauty. And Penn and Parkinson's favorite models, decidedly not ingenues, were ... their wives. (Penn married Lisa Fonssagrives in 1950, and they'd remain married until her death, in 1992; Parkinson and Rogerson remained married until her death, in 1987.)

Indeed, what will probably most strike readers of this work is the grown-up sexuality that infused fashion up until the 1960s (when what Vreeland famously called the "youthquake" hit). Haute couture, of course, was meant to be worn only by the *femme du monde*—with, at least in the case of Balenciaga's designs, a round stomach, ample hips, and even some bulges. In this and other ways, *Vogue* was clearly aimed at the woman over 30: It simply assumed that no woman under that age had developed a sense of style. While its models were hardly matrons, they were, as Angeletti and Oliva note, "perhaps thirty years old and somewhat curvaceous." (Fonssagrives was in fact 38 in the 1950 Paris Collection series, and she continued to model into her 40s.)

Maturity was obviously necessary for the success of photographs that, in their directness, relied as much on the substance of the woman wearing the dress as on the art of the photographer. ▀

Benjamin Schwarz is *The Atlantic's* literary editor and national editor.

What will probably most strike readers of this work is the grown-up sexuality that infused fashion up until the 1960s.

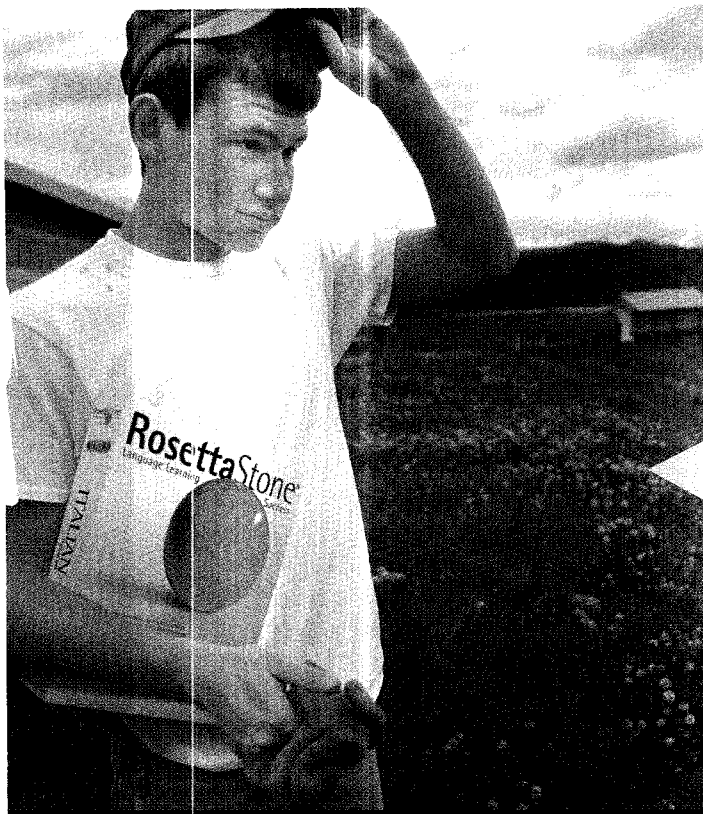
Indeed, although fashion photography was born in 1913, when Nast snapped up highfalutin Continental photographer Baron (!) Adolphe de Meyer, in fact, de Meyer's images—painterly, soft-focused, slightly blurred (he veiled his lens in gauze), and ethereal photos in which the models shrank away (softly, demurely, dreamily) from the camera—worked against *Vogue's* purposes.

But then in 1923, the magazine's new chief photographer, Edward Steichen, introduced the sharp-focused, high-contrast, clean-cut techniques and sensibility of his "straight photography." He showed the dress—with more detail than clothes had ever received. (Before de Meyer, the fashion mags had used illustrators, and photography wouldn't fully supplant illustration until the 1930s.) Far more important, he showed the *woman* in the dress, approaching the camera and impressing her personality on the viewer with a straightforward, offhand confidence that was in keeping with Steichen's aesthetic and with the radically

the move (most prominently McCardell's sophisticated sportswear) and a new kind of woman moving in it (often athletic young mothers), Frissell—who was by all accounts utterly admirable—wasn't prized by the magazine; in fact, she left *Vogue* for *Bazaar* in the mid-1940s. (Surprisingly, Angeletti and Oliva barely mention Frances McLaughlin-Gill, Frissell's protégé, who injected a similar relaxed physicality into *Vogue's* photography.)

The ascendancy of the Steichen sensibility emerged only in the 1940s, when the precisionist-inspired realism of John Rawlings, whose crisply defined color images, at once sharp and subtle (Dahl-Wolfe was his closest counterpart), showed the dress with more clarity and detail than had any previous *Vogue* photographer. (Rawlings receives ample credit here, though his work was all but forgotten until the Fashion Institute of Technology mounted an influential retrospective in 2001.)

That precisionism reached its apo-
gee with Irving Penn's celebrated series of



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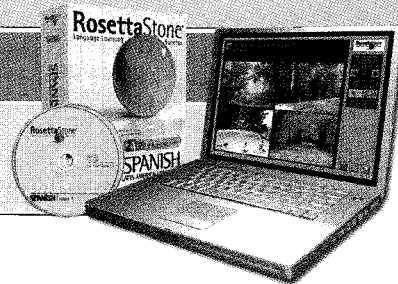
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BOOKS

When it comes to high-end handbags, you are what you tote.

Carried Away

BY LYNN YAEGER

According to *The New York Times*, the 2006–2007 season had not one but three must-have handbags: a Fendi distinguished by two nonfunctional out-sized buckles shaped like B's and thus known as the B Bag; a tote from the house of Goyard made of resin-coated, chevron-patterned linen and cotton frequently decorated with racing stripes and the owner's monogram; and a black

Gallagher tries mightily to explain in her jaunty, slender new book, *It's In the Bag*. If anyone can appreciate what Gallagher, whose previous subjects have included heredity and spirituality, is up against, it's me. As a fashion writer (and, let's face it, compulsive shopper), I've spent the last couple of decades looking at extravagantly priced handbags, trying to uncover their secrets: Why are

dous egg? The answers, it turns out, lie far beyond considerations of practicality or even objective aesthetic appeal. (Sometimes a *jolie laide* bag will take off while a lovely purse languishes.) This much can be said with certainty: Handbags have nosed their way into a place once occupied almost exclusively by diamonds and fancy furs, functioning as badges of honor, announcements that you've arrived at a particular economic or social level, or at the very least, emblems of hopefulness, yearning, and optimism—I have the same bag as a movie star! I am someone to be reckoned with!—that can be brandished for all the world to see.

Forty years ago—even 30—there was no such thing as a “hot” bag. You had something square and black, or brown and squashy, that you carried in the daytime; something smaller and shinier for evening; and maybe something made of velvet or straw if you were a hippie. Now an impressively large number of women, in addition to worrying about how thin they are and whether they can walk a block in the shoes they're wearing, also feel compelled to spend in the neighborhood of \$2,000 on a purse. And it isn't only wealthy women who are shelling out; middle-class women, working women, even schoolgirls are also deeply conscious of what they are carrying. If a serious bag once signified that you were a grown-up, now the brand name on your bag signifies what kind of grown-up you are.

Gallagher attempts to explain the annual prominence of a few particular purses with a survey that ranges from Freud's unsurprising opinions on the subject (“He proposed that the



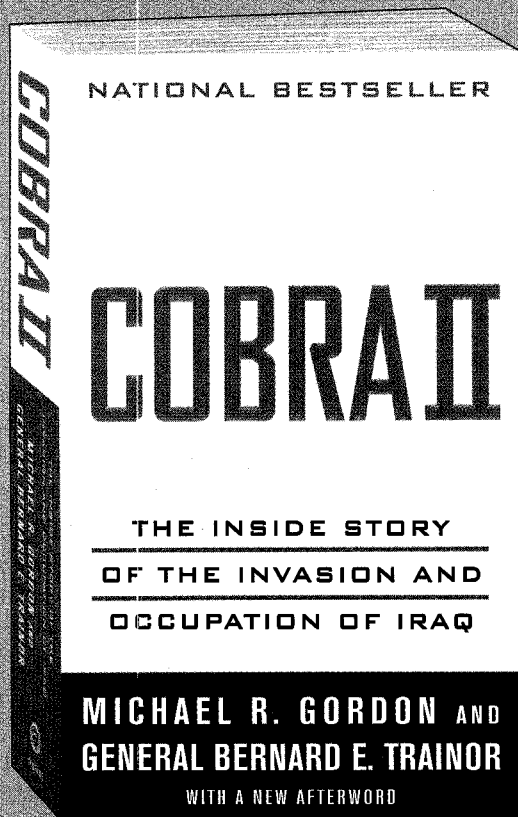
PURSE STRINGS: Fendi's Fifth Avenue boutique in Manhattan

vinyl Chanel sack called the Coco Cabas, an item that more than one observer has likened to a trash bag.

There's no telling how long the trio will be on top—an It bag, like an It girl, can't, by its very nature, remain an It indefinitely. But if the actual satchel changes every couple of seasons, the motivation for owning one remains constant, a state of affairs that Winifred

women dragging veritable suitcases to work when their male counterparts make do with a billfold and a BlackBerry? Why does a frivolous bag like the coquettish Fendi Baguette, shaped as the name would indicate, cause a sensation while the Chanel 2005 (introduced in 1998), which looked like a high-tech pillow and prided itself on its ergonomic correctness, lay a tremen-

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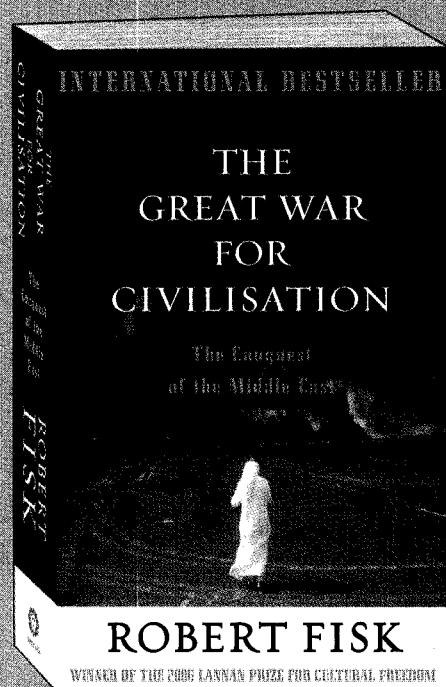
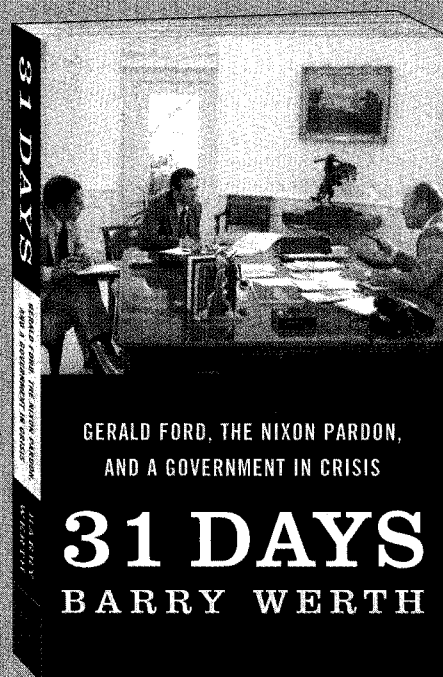
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purse—in his day, a capacious, satchel-like affair—was a symbol of woman and that placing an object inside it represented sexual intercourse”) to the observations of a Condé Nast fashion director with the markings of an amateur historian, who contends that the roots of the current situation lie in the booming '80s, the decade when purses first took center stage: “It was Wall Street! It was excess, it was more and more! It was *big gold chains*! It was very much ‘Let’s get a big watch. A pink alligator bag!’”

Gallagher barely touches on another reason for the ascendance of the handbag in these label-obsessed times: A bag always fits. If that Marc Jacobs frock seems meant for an Olsen twin, that Marc Jacobs quilted tote is one-size-fits-all. And another thing: No matter how wretched your outfit, the “right” handbag lends an imprimatur of glamour. As Kathryn Finney points out in her unintentionally poignant *How to Be a Budget Fashionista*: “If you’re carrying a \$1,000 Christian Dior bag, it doesn’t matter if you’re wearing a jogging suit from Kmart—people will assume you’re wealthy because of the bag.”

So let’s pull on our sweatpants and take a trip to Madison Avenue, where the bags on shoppers’ slender arms mirror the ones in the showcases. At this very moment, the satchels that seem to capture the imagination are for the most part: advertising their provenance discreetly (bearing tiny initialized plaques rather than monogram upholstery); droopy rather than rigid; and overlaid with hardware.

So here are Bottega Venetas, whose distinctive woven leather is itself the calling card; limp Balenciagas, announcing themselves by their louche strings and faintly sinister studs; and massive Paddington Chloes—as if they weren’t weighty enough, they have been further encumbered with brass locks

and keys, making them virtually unliftable by anyone over 25. (I have often wondered if the enthusiasm with which some women embrace a backbreaker like the Paddington is a way of flaunting their vigor and strength, an advertisement of their youthful vitality.)

Could Miuccia Prada, who bears a fair degree of responsibility for the current handbag craze, have known that grown-up women wouldn’t want to drag around 50 extra pounds all day long? In the late 1980s, Prada, a former communist and scion of the Milan-based fashion company, revolutionized the handbag world when she introduced an ultralight black backpack made from the kind of nylon employed in the manufacture of Italian army parachutes. (“I wanted to be something more. But I am what I am,” she told *The New Yorker* a bit wistfully in 1994, reflecting on her transformation from socialist to society figure. “Not everyone can be Albert Schweitzer or Karl Marx.”)

Flinging one of Prada’s backpacks over your shoulder sent much the same message that the stringy, saggy, cracked-leather Balenciaga offered in more recent years—I’m hip; I’m cool; I have broken permanently with the vast undistinguished pocketbooks of my mother’s generation, lumpy carryalls with contents so forbidding that Gallagher describes them as “radioactive”:

Like a medieval chatelaine’s “pocket,” which held money and keys to the household’s larder and treasure, my mother’s purse was an important article filled with important things that children were not to touch.

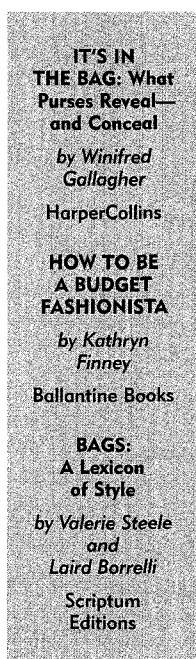
(In fact, not everyone has abandoned these cavernous carryalls. Nora Ephron, in an essay titled “I Hate My Purse,” lifts the veil on what her mommy-bag frequently contained, offering a frankly disgusting roster that includes used

tissues, old tea bags, aging ChapSticks, and unfurled tampons. She also confesses that these days she relies on a plastic shopping tote embellished with an image of a New York City MetroCard—and she insists that she gets compliments on this item.)

Of course, years ago, if your mom was really chic (and sufficiently well-heeled) she didn’t carry a purse at all. In the recent retrospective of Nan Kempner’s wardrobe at the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute, the late socialite’s closet was re-created in breathtaking detail—all 354 jackets and 362 sweaters—but her surprisingly undistinguished collection of handbags was relegated to a high shelf and mostly hidden. Actually, Kempner, like many women of her age and class, frequently didn’t bother with a bag at all. (“I don’t think she needed the status conferred by the handbag,” Harold Koda, the show’s curator, told me by way of explanation.) After all, when you’re traveling from limo to restaurant table, when every bill goes directly to your husband, or your father, what do you really need to carry with you?

As it turns out, women like Kempner are the last gasp of a bagless tradition that dates back hundreds of years. In their excellent, recently reissued *Bags: A Lexicon of Style*, Valerie Steele and Laird Borrelli describe a trajectory that begins with Victorian women depending on tiny bags worn at the waist to carry money, keys, scissors, etc. By the turn of the 20th century, with more women venturing outside the home, the roominess of one’s bag was a reverse indicator of social status—i.e., the bigger the satchel, the more likely it was that you were fending for yourself. A miniature purse, on the other hand, was an indication of a cosseted lifestyle. Steele and Borrelli quote Vanda Foster, who noted in her 1982 book, *Bags and Purses*, that 55 years ago,

a woman who complained that tiny evening bags would not hold both cosmetics and a cigarette case was told that “any woman smart enough to carry this tiny handbag is sure of an escort who will provide the cigarettes.”



Cigarette-pushing escorts notwithstanding, Germaine Greer has argued that “shouldering luggage is an ancient female habit, born of servitude.” Well, maybe, but at least that servitude has now evolved into paid labor. Like Mother Courage, this indomitable working woman, carrying her miniaturized home office on her arm, makes her way through the modern world. But how exactly has this otherwise rational person been convinced that it’s OK, that it is in fact a fine idea, to spend four figures on a particular bag—especially one, in the case of Goyard or Louis Vuitton, that is not even made of leather but has instead been created from frankly cheap-looking coated canvas?

There’s something mysterious as religion—and almost as magical—that makes women so fiercely desire a particular bag in the first place, even when circumstances dictate that they may have to settle for a replica. Though Louis Vuitton, say, has been vocal about the painstaking ways in which it combats forgeries, a trip to Canal Street—or the avenues leading to the Porte de Clignancourt market in Paris, or a certain subway tunnel in Moscow—proves that the company’s efforts, while valiant, are mostly futile. In contrast to most fashion books, Finney’s *Budget Fashionista* is at least sensitive to the patently obvious reason people buy counterfeit bags in the first place: In a chart of “expensive” versus “budget” accessories, Finney’s line of demarcation is \$50, accurately reflecting what most Americans are willing to spend on purses, real or fake. Anyone who wants a phony Louis Vuitton bag can find one, and it’ll probably be a pretty convincing copy—so good that Finney has a section titled “Is My Louis Vuitton Bag Fake?” Here she unintentionally reveals how difficult it can be to tell the real from the mock. She cautions that you should make sure that the color of the handle exactly matches the piping (a ridiculous concern, in reality, since the leather trim on a Louis Vuitton bag will fade unevenly), and that the dustcover not have rounded corners.



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But does buying the fake bag afford the frisson of pleasure that purchasing the \$2,000 version brings? Or, put another way, can an inauthentic bag provide an authentic thrill? It depends. For the sort of person who is troubled by the fact that her dustcover has the wrong corners, the phony bag, which she knows full well is merely similar but not identical to the one Gwyneth Paltrow carries, is a haunting reminder of failure. But for another kind of customer, the same purse can function as the sartorial equivalent of a Palladian villa that is meant to look 300 years old but is in fact newly built.

Two blocks from my Manhattan apartment, street vendors have set up a table on the corner of 14th Street and Fifth Avenue, where they do a brisk business in bogus Fendi spy bags, Marc Jacobs-esque quiltees, and other artful reproductions. There's no fake Chanel

some of which were rendered in white with multicolored "LV" initials, others decorated with cherry blossoms sporting smiley-face centers (better looking than it sounds)—played with the then-stodgy monogram pattern in a way that I found irresistible. Unfortunately, I was not alone. The clerk at the company's Fifth Avenue flagship store informed me, in that chilly way unique to high-end store clerks, that the bag I wanted, the one with the inane flowers, was wait-listed. But then she took not just my name and phone number but also an imprint of my American Express card—a clear indication that this sale was a done deal as soon as the next shipment arrived.

Or so I thought. Finally, after months without a call from Louis Vuitton, and feeling like Olivia de Havilland waiting for Monty Clift to show up in *The Heiress*, I went downtown and

There's something mysterious as religion that makes women desire a particular bag, even if they may have to settle for a replica.

trash bag (though the classic double-C bucket is represented), nor to my knowledge has faux Goyard popped up yet—but a friend reports that he has seen it on the streets of Hong Kong, so it can't be far behind. One day recently I watched as a very stylish young woman came to a screeching halt in front of this table and reached with both hands for a humongous floppy pink ersatz Balenciaga bag, its voluminous tassels gaily flapping in the breeze. She couldn't have looked happier if she were leaning on a showcase at Barney's.

And for a long time I thought I was just like her—insouciant, daring, willing to mix the real and the fake with chic abandon. That is, until a few years ago, when Louis Vuitton introduced a line of bags created by the Japanese artist Takashi Murakami, and I was immediately entranced. It's true that I am easily entranced, but these bags—

handed over \$38 for a rather imaginative facsimile that some anonymous creative genius deep in the Chinese mainland had enhanced with silvery trim and a row of nail heads—not Murakami's original design, it's true, but not so far off that anyone but a real aficionado would notice.

The bag was charming, and I got lots of compliments on it, but in the end, to my shame, I was not able to make my peace with its second-class status. After a few outings, it was relegated to a high shelf, where it rested with authentic bags of seasons past, while I, for my part, turned my attention to a crimson Goyard painted with stripes and a monogram in blue and yellow, colors that signified absolutely nothing except, perhaps, my willingness to spend thousands of dollars on a handbag. ■

Lynn Yaeger writes about style and fashion for *The Village Voice*. She lives in New York City.

BOOKS

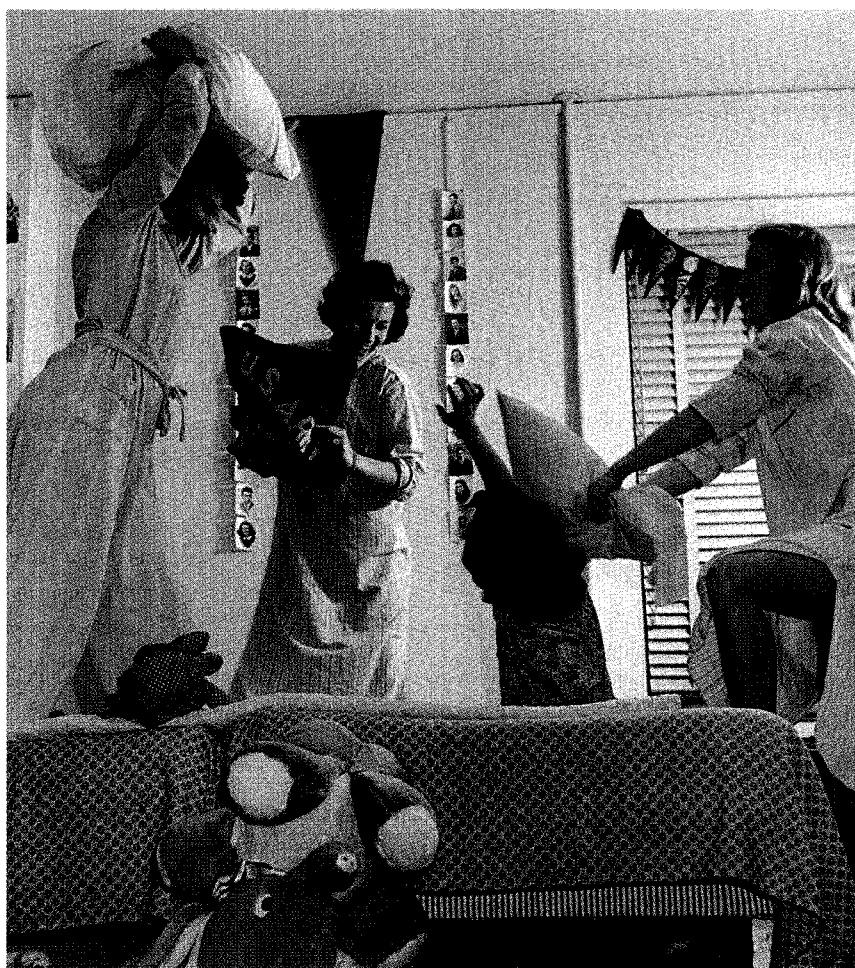
When girls leave home for college, it affects them far more deeply than it does boys—and there's no way parents can protect them once they go.

The Age of Innocence

BY CAITLIN FLANAGAN

When I was an undergraduate, in the early 1980s, I spent a semester of my junior year living in an all-women's dorm. It was cleaner, quieter, and generally pleasanter than the coed dorms I had always favored. In the lobby, flanking the wide front door, were a sunken sitting room and a glassed-in office containing a defunct switchboard. The sitting room was filled with wrought-iron furniture and glass-topped tables, and was referred to as "the porch." Both of these entities, the porch and the switchboard, were relics of the days when the university had observed parietals, the rules by which a college dormitory monitors the comings and goings of its students. Under the old system, there had been a curfew and nightly head count, and young men could not wander through the building; they were announced by the switchboard operator, and could be entertained only in certain venues—the porch, for example, or a bedroom (during posted hours), with the door left wide open.

Parietals, for the most part, have gone the way of the faculty-wife tea. Intended to regulate the sex lives of undergraduates, they belong to a time when colleges maintained a parental relationship with their students: monitoring their health, enforcing bedtimes, and ensuring that their passions did not control their behavior. The strictures were not imposed only on women; Harvard had instituted parietals by 1770, after a student—distinguished by the overweening ambition and ample pocket money of his kind—entertained not one but two prostitutes in his dorm room. But college women felt the brunt of them: Parietals in women's dormitories were typically more restrictive, and they took far more effort to



overthrow, because they had a different purpose when applied to women. Keeping whores out of Harvard residence halls had to do with the honor of Harvard, but keeping Betty Coed a virgin had to do with the honor of Betty Coed.

To an extent, the history of higher education for American women can be traced through the gradual erosion of parietals. As more and more young ladies began to leave their families not

for marriage but for a college education, and then to slowly be granted the freedom of the campus, something profound began to change. The nature of the education women received in college—from the things they studied in the class-

room to the graces and talents they were expected to cultivate beyond the lecture hall—evolved in direct proportion to their gathering personal and sexual freedoms. To be free to sleep wherever you

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choose and with whomever you choose is to be free to turn up your nose at the "Ladies' Course" and to pursue instead a "classical" curriculum.

All of these developments are cataloged in Lynn Peril's invaluable new book, *College Girls*. Hers is not an achievement of analysis; almost every one of her revelations is marshaled to support the contention that colleges imposed more limits on women than on men. (Or, "Color me jeering," as she puts it at one point.) But the book can be forgiven much, because in it Peril has assembled an Aladdin's cave of treasures. She has read, and quotes at length from, a rich and various array of sources: student handbooks and yearbooks, popular novels, and advice manuals from the past two centuries. She has created a record of the daily habits of these women—from what they ate, to what they wore, to the subjects they studied—that will fascinate anyone interested in the history of private life.

As for what they ate—just about anything that wasn't nailed down, apparently. One cannot read this book and continue to believe that the "disordered eating" that besets so many college women is a recent phenomenon. Today it may be marked by grimly endured starvation campaigns or bulimia, but in decades past it was the stuff of a strange glee: festive communal gorging.

The midnight suppers or "spreads," once a major pleasure of college girls' lives, were conducted around a chafing dish—by the 1890s, it was a popular gift for a college-bound girl—in which the hostess cooked rarebits, omelets, and (most popular of all) pan after pan of fudge. By the early 20th century, groups of female eaters commonly gave themselves nicknames: the Stuffers, the Nine Nimble Nibblers, the Grid L. Kakes. While college men during the same period were forging friendships through cane rushes, fraternity hazing, and other acts of ritualized violence, the girls ate—and ate—their way to community and affection.

The other thing that the girls tended to do was to fall head over heels in love with one another. The 1907 Barnard yearbook observed that crushes were "an epidemic peculiar to college girls," marked by "a lump in the throat, a feeling of heat in the face and an inability to speak." While romantic friendships between women were an accepted aspect of life in the 19th century, Peril's reporting on the nature of those relationships is eye-opening. An 1898 advice book called *What a Young Woman Ought to Know* describes the irritating behavior of girls who imposed their ardor on the world:

They go about with their arms around each other, they loll against each other, and sit with clasped hands by the hour. They fondle and kiss until beholders are fairly nauseated.

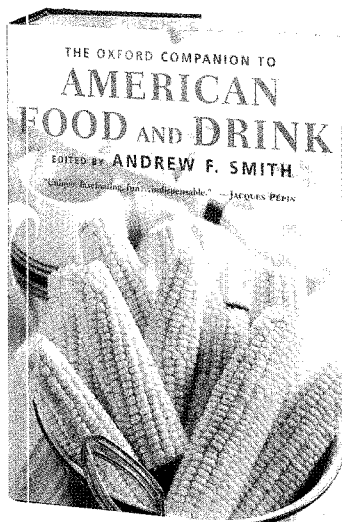
In 1928, one besotted "smasher" at a Texas college formalized her feelings in a yearbook entry: "Roommate, darling, how I love you."

The tendency of these crushes to tip over into actual lesbianism terrified and disgusted parents (as well as college administrators, who were ever on the watch for an "exaggerated athletic bent" or "over-boisterousness") even more than coitus, and may have played a small role in the gradual movement toward coeducation, a phenomenon that skyrocketed in the 1920s, when the population of American undergraduates swelled. Once coeducation became the norm, the goal of a woman's college years shifted from preparing to become a wife to catching an actual husband, which in turn launched the thousands of proms, formals, and education-ending proposals that gave coeds a reputation (often well-deserved) of being less intellectually serious than college men.

In all of these behaviors—the comforting with food, the lavishing of love on whoever was available to receive it, the dreaming about husbands and households—I find poignant evidence of the one fact about these girls' lives so obvious that it is rarely considered at

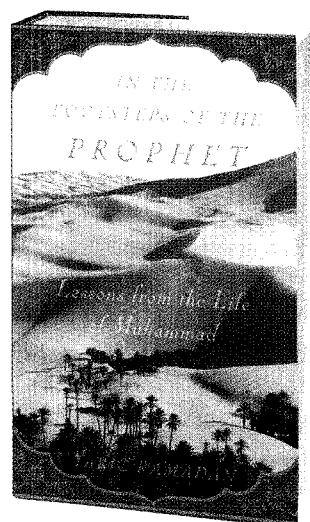
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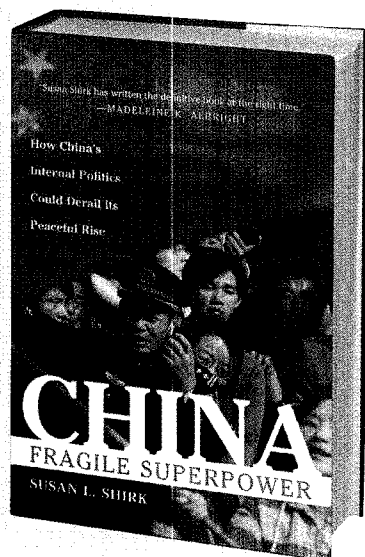
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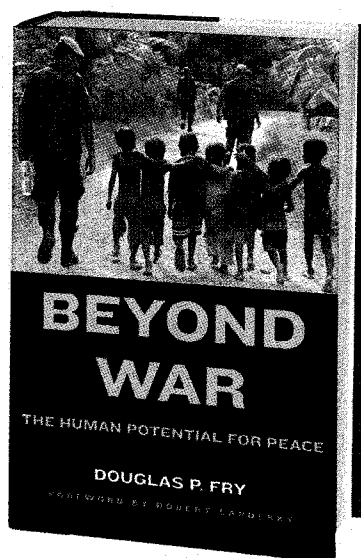
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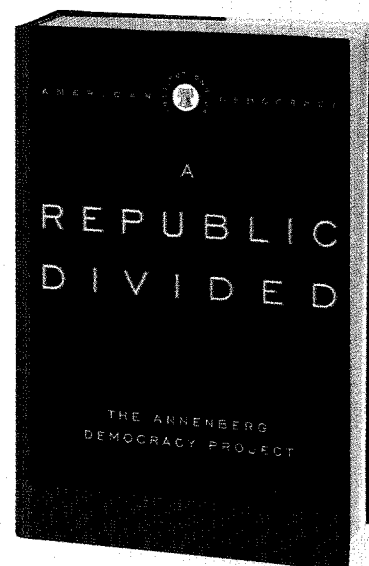


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all: They had all been abruptly uprooted from their homes. Girls have a different relationship to home than boys do: They are more sentimental about it as well as more critical of its shortcomings, and they are moored to its routines and rhythms more deeply. Even those girls for whom leave-taking is more escape than sorrow enter a period of profound self-examination—and often melancholy—when they break from the home where they were raised.

The most arresting part of Peril's book is the brief, vivid, and appealing portrait she presents of herself as an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin 25 years ago. She arrived with a butch haircut, a suitcase full of punk clothes mail-ordered from New York, and a "tough-chick persona." I suspected that she was romanticizing her past, but then she shows us her freshman ID card, and she really was a fright. Underneath, though, she was as timid as any 18-year-old girl plucked from home and set down on the campus of a huge university. Too shy to raise her hand in class, or even to order a pizza over the telephone, she was so rattled by a boy who flirted with her on the first day of French II that she promptly dropped the class. "In my heart of hearts," she writes—the phrase itself a kind of linguistic Fair Isle sweater—"I knew I wasn't ready for college yet." She wandered through her four years, her melancholy settling into a depression, and despite all of her bravado—and a short, fun fling with feminist theory—she ended up in the greatest of all girl majors: art history.

Peril reports, accurately, that much of the historical anxiety about sending girls to college had to do with the question of sex. In the 19th century, many believed that too much education could rob a girl of "the womanly virtues" and set her on a course for spinsterhood. Coeducation was problematic on two fronts: Not only was a girl in danger of losing her virginity; she was also capable of falling in love with the wrong kind of fellow, perhaps even returning home engaged to someone her family had never met. Nowadays, with the threats

to a woman's virginity ever more numerous, and engagement regarded by most coeds as a quaint arrangement slated for the distant future, parents' worries have only multiplied.

Proof that the sex lives of college women remain an object of intense cultural fascination can be found in a book like Laura Sessions Stepp's *Unhooked* (reviewed in last month's "Cover to Cover"), which documents the semi-anonymous "hooking up" that is now the norm. Stepp's intention was to study this phenomenon open-mindedly, "hoping to understand rather than intending to censure." But journalistic objectivity was soon replaced by alarm

sheer embarrassment since the early 1970s. (My lecture arrived, in my mother's Palmer Method handwriting, on my bedside table midway through 12th grade, and the extent to which it mortified me—my mother was a nurse and knew how to draw a fairly precise medical illustration—cannot be overstated.)

I'm sure that lectures from Mom on how to have super great sex don't always fall on deaf ears. But Mom's voice becomes a distant whisper once a young woman arrives at college, where she will no longer be regarded as a cosseted girl-child in need of protection and limit setting. It is impossible to imagine non-religious colleges involving themselves in the kind of sexual decision making

The history of higher education for American women can be traced through the gradual erosion of parietal rules.

and even horror. She found girls who were "exhausted physically, emotionally and spiritually" by the practice. The girls' behavior is starkly contemporary, but the adult's characterization of it—and of the specific ways that sexuality can deplete a woman—could have been lifted from a 19th-century tract. In placing the blame for these developments on three forces ("the ethic of female empowerment; parental expectations for academic and professional achievement; and reluctance on the part of authorities on campus to intervene in students' social lives"), Stepp occupies the squishy middle ground where many progressive women unhappily find themselves: Yes, yes, yes to female freedom and empowerment, but Jesus Christ, why are these girls giving blow jobs to guys they hardly know?

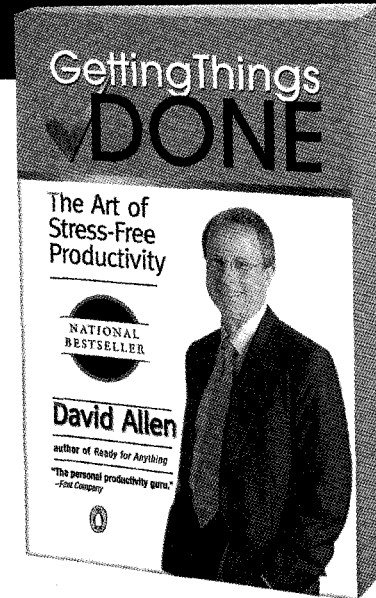
She pulls herself together long enough to conclude the book with a "Dear Daughters" letter. It's the kind of "sex is a beautiful thing, when it's between two loving people" lecture that has been making young girls want to jump out of the nearest window from

that concerns Stepp, because to be an undergraduate today is to be treated as a fully independent adult, as even a cursory glance at the admissions materials of most schools demonstrates. (I would never have attended a college that monitored my sleeping arrangements; like most of my friends in the women's dorm, I often spent the night at a boyfriend's apartment.) Obviously, the young women Stepp describes in her book were almost all nice girls raised by nice parents in nice neighborhoods. But just as obviously, they changed in some ugly ways when left on their own. Given the coarsening of the culture, the intense peer pressure and corresponding desire to fit in that have always marked college life, and the way very young women are defined today as at once independent and exploitable, the bitter pill for many parents sending their daughters to college is that there is no possible way to protect them from what they will encounter once they have been dropped off at the freshman dorm. ▀

Caitlin Flanagan is the author of *To Hell With All That* (2006). She is at work on *Girl Land*, a book about the emotional life of pubescent girls.

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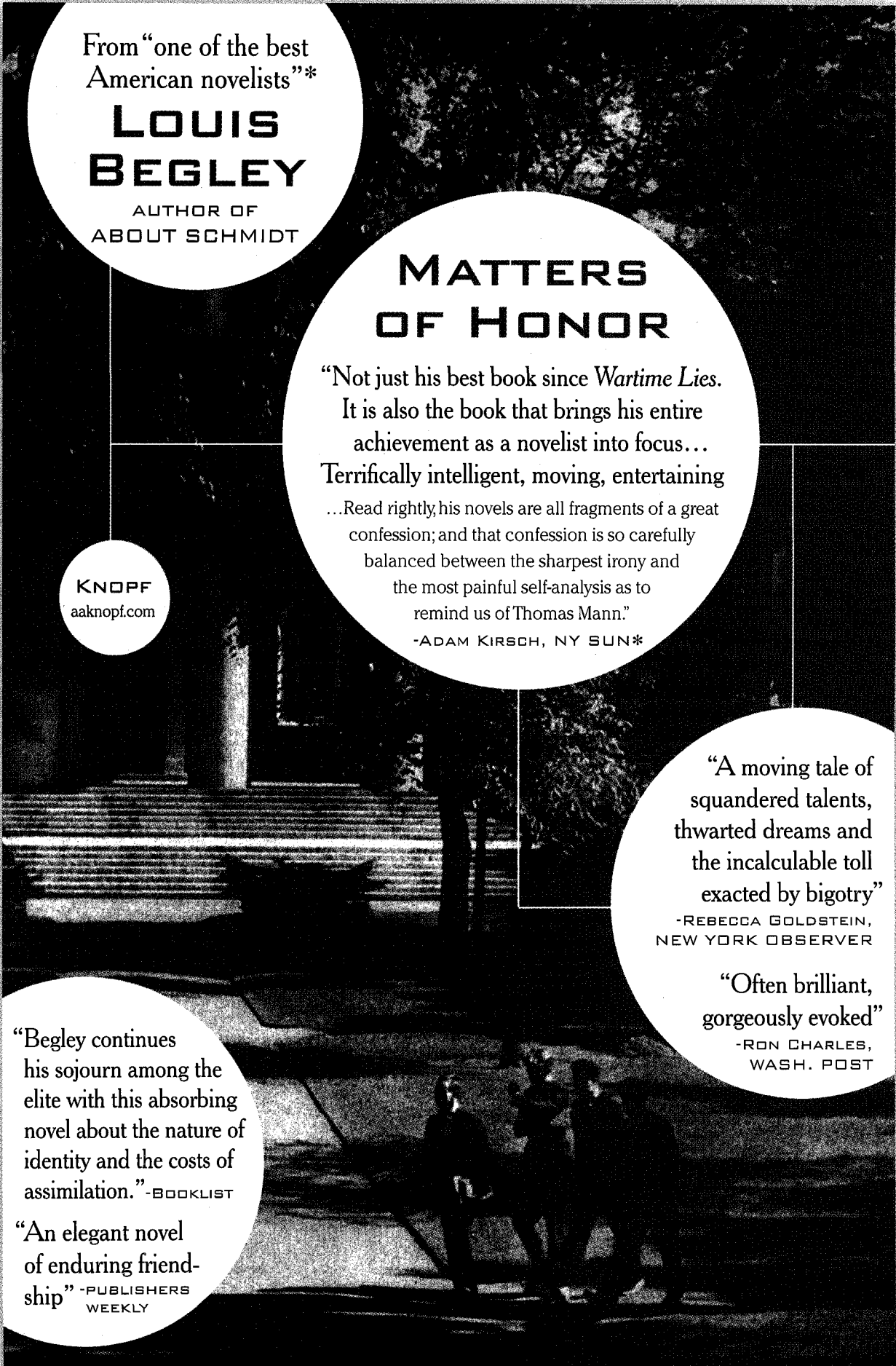
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BOOKS

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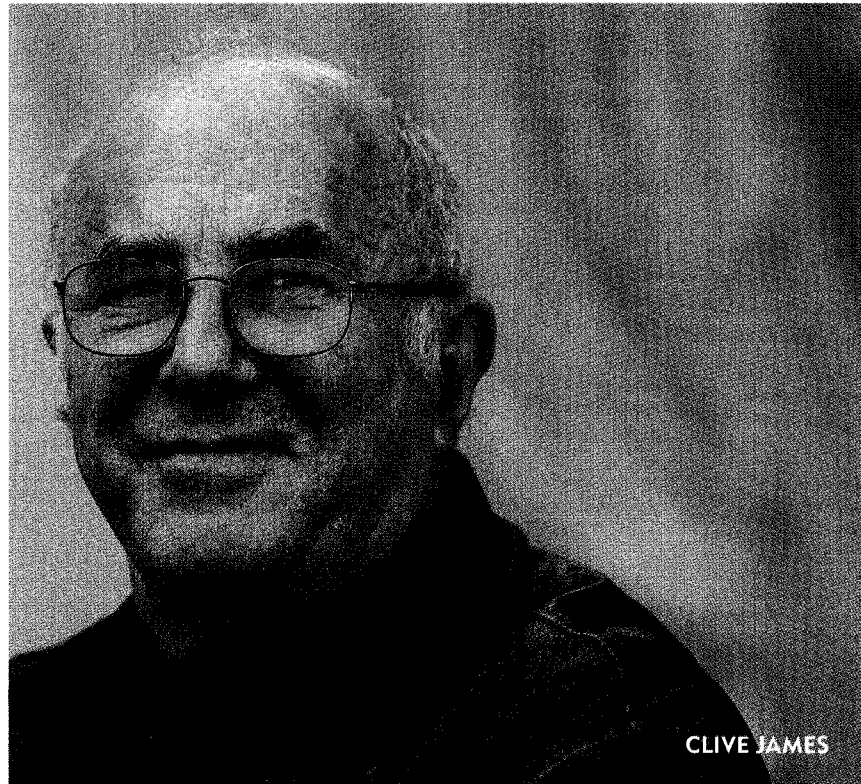
The Omnivore

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

I opened this book, which despite its subtitle is a series of mini-profiles promising a rich and varied salad of brief lives and long reputations, only to nearly slam it shut again when I read Clive James thanking an editor for rescuing him from a confusion between Louis Malle and Miloš Forman—"a conspicuous instance of the embarrassing phenomenon known to clinical psychologists as the Malle-Forman malformation." How could anyone, embarking on such a project, be so arch and so ingratiating?

Yet perhaps the joke, such as it is, was on me. Clive James knows very well that there is huge confusion and insecurity as to which Mann was which, and as to the differences between, say, the Frankfurt School and the Vienna Circle, and part of his objective is to show—disarmingly, in the result—how long he himself took to acquire any confidence in these matters. A certain amount of evolution is required to produce the omnivore. I once heard Susan Sontag, in conversation with Umberto Eco, define the polymath as one "who is interested in everything, and in nothing else." A trifle annoying and complacent as that was, it nonetheless raised the question of how a polymath—or omnivore—should learn to discriminate.

Although in choice of subjects James oscillates as far in one direction as Coco Chanel and as far in the other as Czesław Miłosz, he doesn't waste very much time in giving us his principle of selection. It is of the sort that might have been employed by Isaiah Berlin, or the editors of the old *Partisan Review*. To qualify for his admiration, you must have witnessed



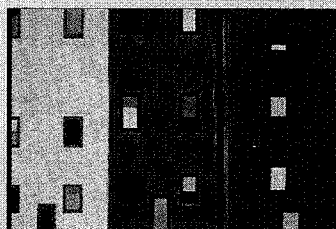
CULTURAL AMNESIA:
Necessary Memories
From History
and the Arts
by Clive James
Norton

for liberal principles in a time of trial. To earn his disapprobation, you need to have said something so wickedly stupid that (to paraphrase Orwell) only an intellectual would be daft enough to fall for it. Most of the candidates are therefore drawn from the gaunt gallery of the 20th century, with a strong emphasis on its hellish midpoint: the locust years in which the "European tidal waves," as James phrases it in writing about Manès Sperber, "collided." Even those few who evade this verdict by the grace of early birth, like Hegel and Proust, are reviewed in its retrospective light. If a single motto could distill the whole, it might be the one furnished

by the Italian prosecutor Virginio Rognoni, who took on the Red Brigades in the 1980s without resorting overmuch to police-state tactics and said: "In whichever way a democratic system might be sick, terrorism does not heal it; it kills it. Democracy is healed with democracy."

Such a platitude excites few intellectuals. In fact it bores and disgusts so many of them that they prefer to deal in high-sounding justifications for violence. Thus another way of summarizing James's ambition might be to say that he tries to glamorize the uninspiring—tries to show how tough and shapely were the commonsense formulations of Raymond Aron, for example, when set against the seductive, panoptic bloviations of Jean-Paul Sartre. This might appear to be too

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easy a task—how much nerve does it really take to defend the vital center?—but James succeeds in it by trying to comb out all centrist clichés, and by caring almost as much about language as it is possible to do.

Alasdair MacIntyre once wrote an essay called "How to Write About Lenin—and How Not To," in which he said that the one unpardonable historical sin was that of being patronizing. If you could not or would not care to imagine what conditions were like in 1905 or 1917, then it might be best if you kept your virginal judgments to yourself.

On the whole, James passes this test. He can see why, as a German nationalist, Ernest Jünger might have been soft on Hitler, which means that he can see where Jünger went wrong. He grants that Fidel Castro possessed charisma and then wasted it. Instead of simply saying that Leszek Kołakowski got most things right about Poland and about Communism, he says the following about his *Main Currents of Marxism*:

[The book extends] from Marx's own lifetime to those crucial years after Stalin's death when the dream, somehow deprived of energy by the subtraction of its nightmare element, was already showing signs of coming to an end, in Europe at least.

This sentence does a lot of work, especially in its second clause, while that coda about Europe (somewhat inelegantly tacked on, perhaps) shows that James revisited the aperçu and thought about it in the light of Chile and South Africa.

He has a gift for noticing and highlighting the telling phrase. Albert Camus' observation, in *The Rebel*, that "tyrants conduct monologues above a million solitudes" allows James a useful meditation on the role of sheer tedium in the apparatus of totalitarianism. Indeed, several of the miniature portraits here are occasions for tangential reflections. Heinrich Heine provides an excuse for discussing the terrifying rise of celebrity culture. William Hazlitt spurs an excellent piece on the importance (and rarity) of generosity among literary rivals—where a paragraph on

Auden and Yeats wouldn't have come amiss. Reflections on Georg Christoph Lichtenberg detour into some notes on the disappointments of modern pornography. A treatment of Evelyn Waugh becomes a learned disquisition on the use of the dangling modifier by, among others, Anthony Powell.

There are also occasional repetitions: James (whose Australian father was a casualty of the Pacific War) thrice attacks Gore Vidal for his belief that Franklin Roosevelt deliberately provoked Pearl Harbor, but in the process makes a useful point by describing Japan's modern right wing as "recidivist"—a far better term than the more common "revisionist." There are some oddities: Beatrix Potter is upbraided for concealing the awful truth about bacon in *The Tale of Pigling Bland*, whereas any schoolboy knows that she could be positively ghoulish about human and other carnivorousness—see especially *The Tale of Mr. Tod*, but also *Peter Rabbit*. Of H. L. Mencken it is said, very acutely, that "a guardian angel riding in his forehead made sure that the stuff from his brain's bilges didn't get through from his secret diaries to the public page." (The word *usually* might have been forgivable here.)

In attempting to do this anthology justice, I am running the risk of making it sound more eclectic than it really is. If James could have been born in another time and place, he would have chosen Mitteleuropa in the first third of the 20th century—that drowned world and lost Bohemia of Jewish savants and painters and café-philosophers. It is men like Peter Altenberg and Karl Kraus whom he envies, while of course never ceasing to wonder (as we all must) how he himself would have shaped up when the Nazis came. Another of his gold standards is the Russian and French literary opposition, leavened with a good sprinkling of those—like Robert Brasillach—whose talents led them to identify with the overdogs.

A unifying principle of the collection is its feminism. James believes that this is a good cause in its own right, and

also a useful negation of the ideological mind-set, since "feminism is a claim for impartial justice, and all ideologies deny that such a term has meaning." He celebrates and mourns Anna Akhmatova and Nadezhda Mandelstam—I wish he had included Rosa Luxemburg—and highlights less-well-known heroines such as Heda Kovaly, Ricarda Huch, and Sophie Scholl, flawless ornament of the White Rose resistance circle in Hitler's Germany. The book is dedicated to Scholl's memory, and to the living examples of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Aung San Suu Kyi, and Ingrid Betancourt. Men who maltreated or exploited women, or who took them for granted, are invariably awarded a chivalrous drubbing—Rainer Maria Rilke being given a deservedly hard time in this respect. And James clearly wants us to understand that his historical examples are meant to be contemporary and relevant, in that today's Islamist totalitarianism has given us all the warning—precisely by its contempt for women—that we could possibly need.

One of James's charms as a critic is that he genuinely seems to enjoy praising people. (An early collection of his poems was actually titled *Fan Mail*.) But in order to appear ungrudging, he is sometimes hyperbolic, and therefore unconvincing: Is it really apt to write of Camus that "the Gods poured success on him but it could only darken his trench coat: it never soaked him to the skin"? Or of Flaubert that "he searched the far past, and lo! He found a new dawn"?

Yet much may be forgiven a man who can begin a paragraph by saying, "It will be argued that Heinrich Heine was not Greta Garbo," or who can admit that for years he has been authoritatively mispronouncing the name *Degas* and the word *empyrean*. If you open *Cultural Amnesia* in the hope of getting a bluffer's guide to the intellectuals, you will be disappointed; but if you read it as an account of how an educator has himself been self-educated, you will be rewarded well enough. ▀

Christopher Hitchens is an *Atlantic* contributing editor and a *Vanity Fair* columnist.

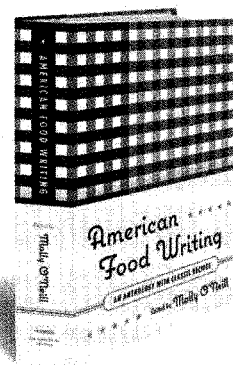
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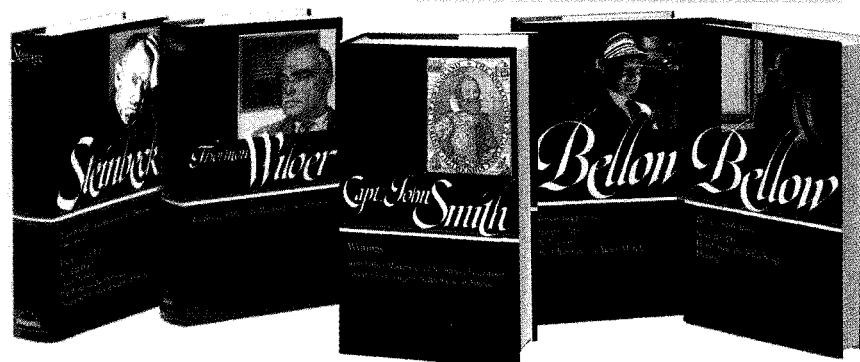
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BOOKS

A guide to additional releases

COVER to COVER

CURRENT AFFAIRS



Poor People

by William T. Vollmann (Ecco)
Let Us Now Praise Famous Men meets *The Rough Guide*, as the astonishingly prolific Vollmann (whose recent works include a 3,300-page treatise on the nature of human violence, and a National Book Award-winning novel) here meditates on poverty, asking poor people on six continents the direct and often complicated question, "Why are you poor?" Vollmann relates numerous haunting vignettes but no silver linings, and creates a remarkably detailed picture of the banality of human suffering, as well as of the limits of writerly observation in altering or ennobling it: "In appropriate contradiction of this book's hopes and pretenses, poor people's answers are frequently as impoverished as their lives."

Planet India

by Mira Kamdar (Scribner)
America's obsessive focus on China tends sometimes to obscure how amazingly fast India is transforming itself into an economic superpower. This briskly written, vivid account shows how that subcontinental country's films, technology, and service industries have made India an ever-growing presence on the American scene. Time to recognize yet another awakening giant snapping at our heels.

HISTORY



Household Gods

by Deborah Cohen (Yale)
What is it about the British and their home fixtures and furnishings? Perhaps classical education made the Roman household gods—lares and penates—a byword among Britain's upper crust. In any case, all that stuff crowded into Victorian rooms, along with that over-stuffed furniture, speaks volumes about

the stuffiness of 19th-century British society. This diverting, tellingly illustrated book takes us through the dim heart of Victorian clutter and into the fresh air of the modern design that swept it away.

Hitler's Beneficiaries

by Götz Aly (Metropolitan Books)
The Wages of Destruction
by Adam Tooze (Viking)
Hitler's Beneficiaries crisply shows how the Nazi regime starved and depleted its subject nations, thereby raising Germans' standard of living and—disturbingly—gaining their often-enthusiastic support. *The Wages of Destruction* is a vast tome of economic history, a category seldom recommended to the general reader. But this exhaustively researched study cogently argues that the Nazis' scheme for world domination was at least as grounded in economics as in military might, and it locates, at the very heart of his ambitions, Hitler's determination that Germany displace the United States as the world's dominant economic power.

Saltwater Slavery

by Stephanie E. Smallwood (Harvard)
This deeply researched, tightly focused, and skillfully evocative look at the Atlantic slave trade, 1675–1725, details the experience of crossing the ocean—an ordeal fatal to many of the slaves who were forced to undertake it.

Blitz: The Story of December 29, 1940

by Margaret Gaskin (Harcourt)
The Luftwaffe launched bigger air raids during the Blitz, but none captured the public imagination, then and afterward, like the incendiary attack of the Sunday night after Christmas 1940—an event memorialized in the iconic image of St. Paul's Cathedral silhouetted against the burning city. Gaskin, a London journalist, deftly evokes the desperation as water pumps run dry, and the horror as millions

of books burn on Paternoster Row while one beautiful Wren church after another is destroyed.

BIOGRAPHY



Beatrix Potter:

A Life in Nature
by Linda Lear (St. Martins)
With Renée Zellweger playing Beatrix Potter in a biopic, it seems safe to say that the children's book author and illustrator is, for now at least, more famous than Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail, and Peter. Of course, there wouldn't be a movie if Potter hadn't invented and immortalized those enchanting rabbits, but there might still have been this book, since she was also an important British conservationist and naturalist (mycologists later confirmed her findings on fungi and lichens). This comprehensive biography presents the multifarious facets of Potter's life, from her quietly rebellious girlhood in a conventional family, through her literary and artistic work, to her role as the formidable Mrs. Heelis, chatelaine of virtually all she beheld and preserved in England's picturesque Lake District.

John Betjeman: A Life

by A. N. Wilson (FSG)
John Osborne: The Many Lives of the Angry Young Man
by John Heilpern (Knopf)
Two biographies of 20th-century British men of letters bring us England's teddy bear, John Betjeman, and its teddy boy, John Osborne. Wilson's biography of Betjeman—minor poet, savior of England's Victorian architecture—became infamous before it reached these shores, because it includes, embarrassingly, a rival biographer's hoax. This hiccup shouldn't eclipse the fact that the book is that rare thing: a first-rate biography of a second-rate figure. Osborne, for his part, was always tormented and tormenting, the scourge of the Establishment

and also of those around him. The angry young man never stopped looking back in anger—he titled his last book, after all, with his catchphrase, *Damn You, England*—and Heilpern, in this comprehensive biography, tells us where all that rage came from. He also puts under a very necessary microscope Osborne’s two wonderfully compelling but not always reliable memoirs.

SOCIETY and CULTURE



The Gospel of Food

by Barry Glassner (Ecco)

In his previous book, the sociologist Glassner showed us why the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. In this latest effort, he applies the same pragmatism to the ever-more-complex interlocking worlds of food, gastronomy, and health. The result is another work of refreshingly sensible skepticism about all manner of nostrums that offers some sound advice to avoid extremes, in either practice or expectation. Along the way, Glassner gives sharp views of the restaurant scene and piquant portraits of some of its stars.

Alice Waters and Chez Panisse

by Thomas McNamee (Penguin Press)

American cuisine today probably has no greater star than Alice Waters, founder of Berkeley’s Chez Panisse restaurant. As a leading champion of organic food and sustainable agriculture, Waters has transformed food culture in the United States. Now someone who hobnobs with Bill Clinton and the Prince of Wales, she is still concerned that poor children obtain the benefits of organic produce, even if they have to learn to grow it themselves. This biography provides too much information, especially of the gossip variety, but even that supplies context for the spectacular effusions served forth by her protégé Jeremiah Tower, in his 2003 memoir, *California Dish*.

The Iron Whim

by Darren Wershler-Henry (Cornell)

Witty and idiosyncratic, this history of typewriting says more than one might think possible about the subject. The author, a Canadian scholar, ranges from the QWERTY/Dvorak format wars to the 2004 “Memogate” scandal that brought down Dan Rather; in one chapter, he

entertainingly debunks the notion that a band of monkeys, given typewriters and time, would eventually reproduce Shakespeare’s works. Wershler-Henry’s most interesting achievement, however, is documenting how the typewriter, once a dreaded totem of mechanization, has become an object of nostalgia, in a process that will surely repeat itself as technology advances. After all, as he writes, “Typewriting died a violent death, and ... violent deaths lead to hauntings.”

Class Acts

by Rachel Sherman (California)

A Yale sociologist provides this consistently interesting (but distractingly jargon-y) ethnography of two luxury hotels and the nuanced interactions between guests and staff there. Sherman, who worked a variety of hotel jobs while doing her research, offers an often entertaining look inside a well-oiled service machine (as a concierge, she fielded such requests as “find live crab ... find blue roses ... make appointment with German-speaking dentist”), while raising necessary questions about labor, justice, and our common humanity in an age when some people go hungry while room service is ordered for well-heeled dogs.

FICTION

The Custodian of Paradise

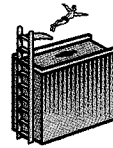
by Wayne Johnston (Norton)

In this wildly dramatic novel, Johnston, ever bold in character, plot, and setting, has plucked the 6-foot-3-inch, intellectual, hard-drinking, and intensely independent Sheilagh Fielding from his earlier book on Newfoundland, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, and set her down on a long-abandoned island in the waning days of World War II to review her past.

Winterton Blue

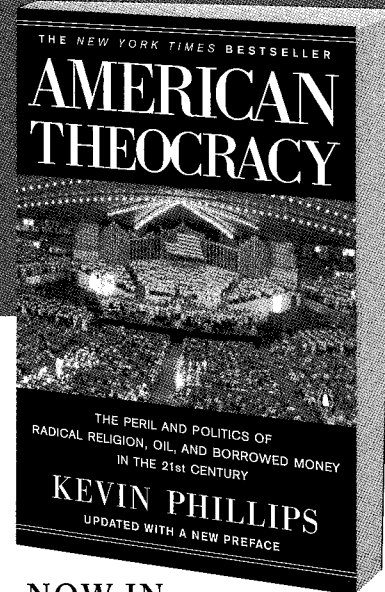
by Trezza Azzopardi (Grove Press)

Two young misfits negotiate old betrayals, long-standing attachments, and fresh love, in a windy town on Britain’s North Sea. As always, Azzopardi thrusts her readers inside her characters’ skins with her tight focus, stream-of-consciousness style, and use of the present tense. There’s lots of charm here, as well as suspense and occasional moments of madness.



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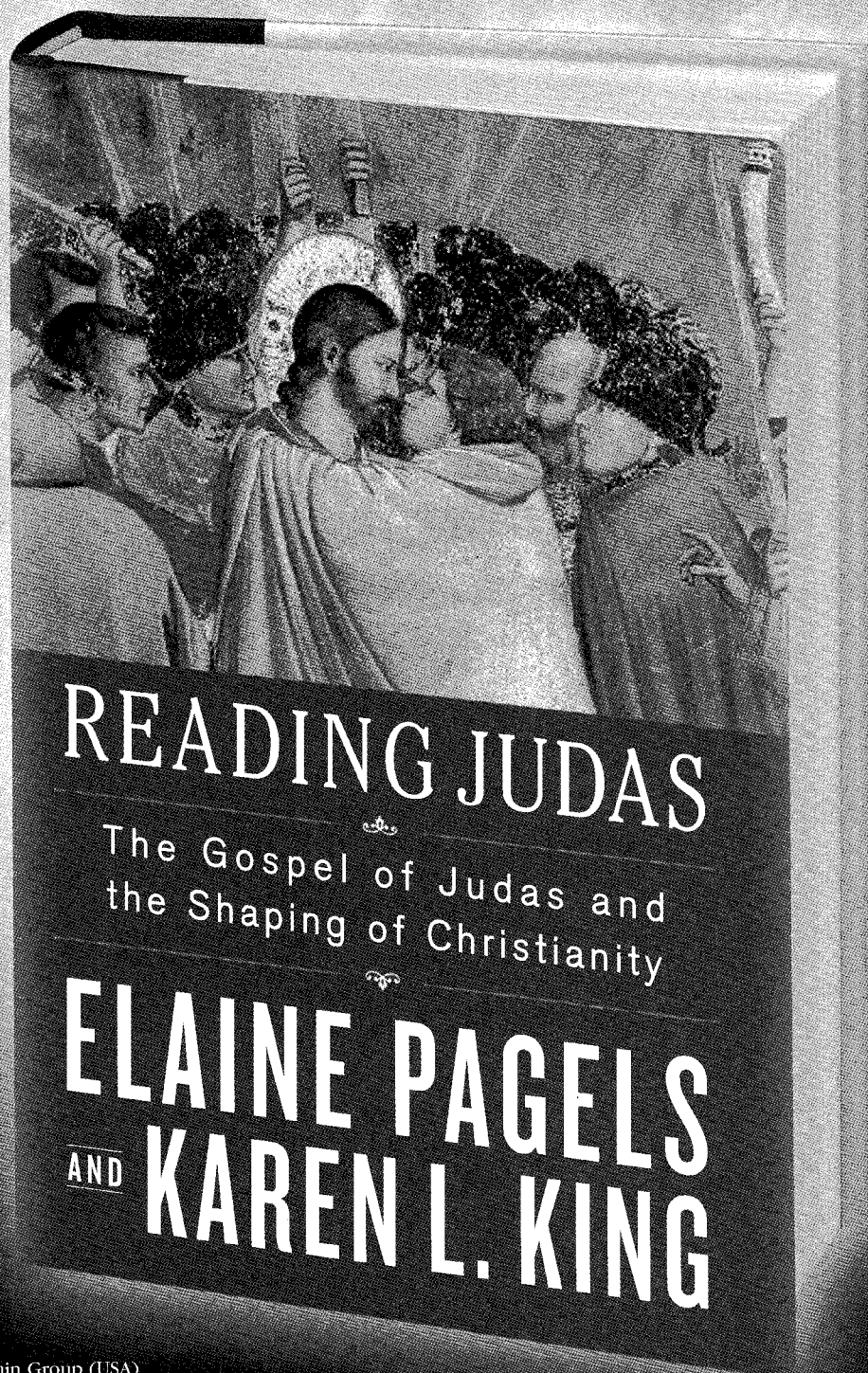
Elaine Pagels is the *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Gnostic Gospels*.

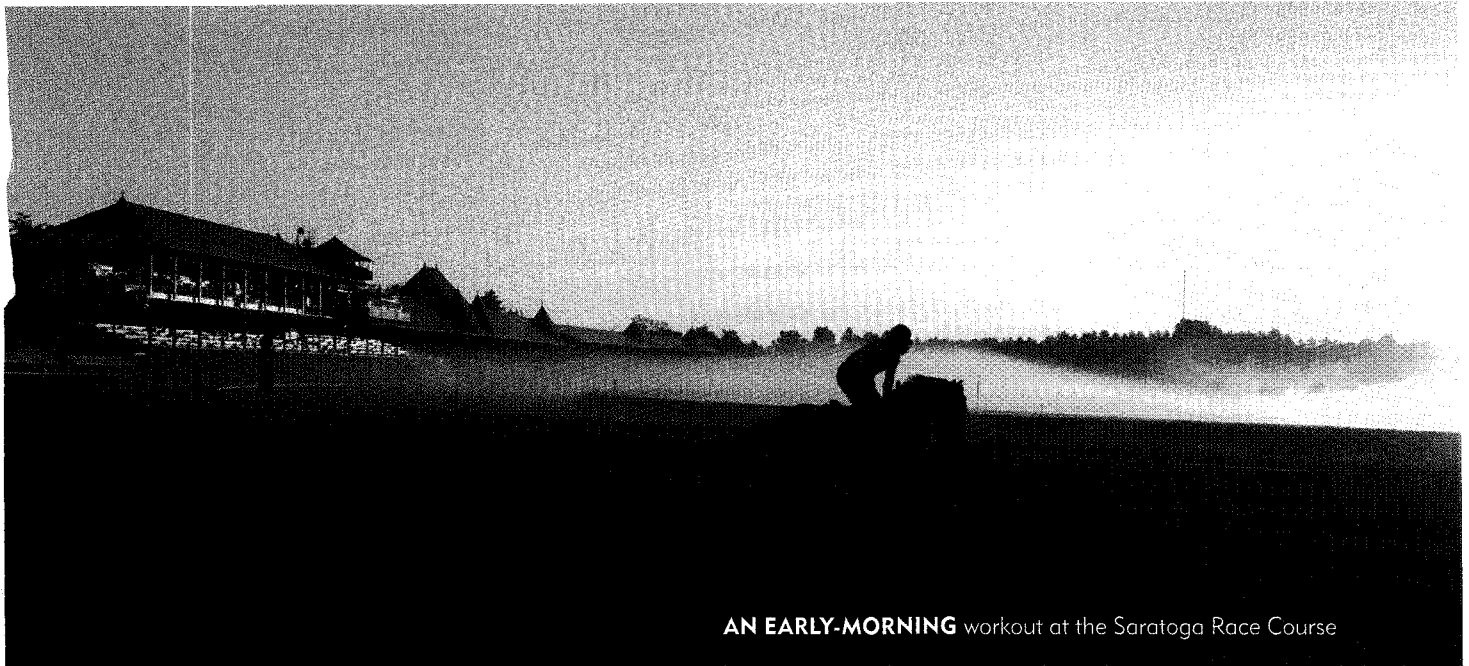
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AN EARLY-MORNING workout at the Saratoga Race Course

TRAVELS

Watching the people, playing the ponies, and drinking the water in Saratoga Springs

Off to the Races

BY WAYNE CURTIS

It was nearly post time for the fifth race of the day at the Saratoga Race Course, and I was leaning on the rails along the paddock, refining a betting system I'd recently devised. I can't reveal much about it, other than to say it involved a close read of the jockeys and was strongly influenced by Malcolm Gladwell's book *Blink*.

And at Saratoga, you can get close. The paddock is set amid elms, maples, and vendors of sugary confections. Anyone who can afford the \$3 admission can spend the better part of a day lounging in this area, called "the backyard," and many do. Hundreds of people around me were enfolded in origami-like nylon chairs they'd extracted from quivers and set up next to Lego-colored coolers. The jockeys and their horses filed past, mere feet away, and some of the riders exchanged pleasantries with the crowd. I was close enough to smell the

horses, and I could tell—*blink!*—which jockeys were sweaty and nervous, which crisp and collected.

Wagering on horses in Saratoga Springs started in the mid-19th century, and the racecourse is home to one of the oldest thoroughbred stakes in the country: the Travers, first run in 1864. The track is wonderfully historic and cinematic, with a steeply raked grandstand and languorously spinning outdoor ceiling fans. Remarkably, it has been holding its own in an era when other historic tracks have been faltering. Saratoga was not just one of the first of the great tracks; it will likely be one of the last.

After the riders passed by, I hopped on the escalator up into the grandstand to place my bets and take my seat. The bell sounded, and the horses were out of the gate. They formed a long rosary on the far side of the track, then came around and thundered past me in a blur. The winner

was ridden by a sweaty, nervous-looking jockey. I pulled out the program, looked over the lineup for the next race, and settled on a new betting strategy, which I also can't say much about other than it involved the names of ex-girlfriends.

While waiting for the next post time, I sat back and enjoyed an order of freshly cooked potato chips—they were invented here in 1853 by a chef piqued when a customer complained that his fries weren't thin enough. And munching away, I realized that this sort of space—where one is simultaneously sheltered and exposed, both indoors and out—is an essential part of any great vacation. All of my most memorable holidays involve idle time in this third space, whether it's under a café umbrella, or in a three-sided back-country shelter, or on a chaise lounge beneath the slightly menacing shadows of coconut palms. Ensnared amid the elaborate trusses and brackets of the

THE TRAVEL ADVISORY

Places to stay

It takes persistence to find an available or affordable room in Saratoga Springs during the racing season (this year, July 25 to September 3), when even mid-range chain motels charge close to \$200 a night. Plan well ahead, and make use of the lodging links at www.saratoga.com.

Situated right on Broadway, the 31-room **Saratoga Arms** (518-584-1775; www.saratogaarms.com) combines the intimate feel of a bed-and-breakfast with the crisp service of a boutique hotel. Housed in an 1870 building with a wraparound porch, it's within easy strolling distance of downtown restaurants, bars, and shops.

Just down the street, the historic **Adelphi Hotel** (518-587-4688; www.adelphihotel.com) has a superbly haute-Victorian feel, but without gratuitous frills, and features a second-floor piazza for people-watching. On the downside, the guest services, plumbing, and air-conditioning can at times hark back to an earlier era.

The **Gideon Putnam Hotel** (800-732-1560; www.gideonputnam.com) is located in Saratoga Spa State Park; part of the enjoyment is seeing guests wandering in robes on the walkways between the hotel and the pools and spa. The rooms in this Georgian-style hotel are more basic than luxe.

Places to eat

Dine (26 Henry Street; 518-587-9463) is an elegant, upscale fusion eatery in a former Freihofer bread outlet. It has a jazzy, up-tempo sound track and an inviting selection of globally influenced dishes, with entrées like Thai duck breast and veal Sorrentino.

Hattie's Restaurant (45 Phila Street; 518-584-4790) is a casual, New Orleans-inspired eatery that's gone

through two owners since the eponymous Hattie passed, in 1998. Happily, the quality of the food has remained undimmed, and the fried chicken still has a small but cultlike following.

9 Maple Avenue (518-583-2582) is a jazz club with the feel of a well-heeled European drinking establishment, and features dozens of bourbons, Irish whiskeys, and single-malt scotches.

Things to do

The **Saratoga Race Course** (518-584-6200; www.nyra.com/Saratoga) is open daily except Tuesdays. Post time is 1 p.m. Admission to the grandstand is \$3; clubhouse admission is \$5; reserved seats are available.

The **National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame** (518-584-0400; www.racingmuseum.org), founded in 1950, tells the story of racing in Saratoga Springs and beyond. More than 300 horses, jockeys, and trainers are enshrined in the hall. Admission is \$7.

The **Roosevelt Baths and Spa** (518-226-4790; www.gideonputnam.com) offers a range of services, including manicures, algae wraps, waxing, and massages (hot stone, Swedish, and deep-tissue). A simple soaking in the mineral baths is \$20; an herbal bath is \$26.

A free brochure laying out a self-guided mineral-waters tasting tour is available at the Saratoga Springs Visitor Center. It includes maps and descriptions of the 17 mineral springs in and around the city, not all of which are active all the time. Among the most popular are the two found at the **Joseph Bruno Pavilion**, in the state park, where visitors can contrast the mild State Seal water with the more powerful—some might say nasty—waters of Geyser Spring.

CONGRESS PARK, home to Congress Spring, discovered in 1792

old grandstand, I took in the breezes and aromas and squawky sounds of the track, able to watch others without feeling watched myself.

Add the quirky local lore and the haute-urban amenities outside the gates in Saratoga Springs, and this small, inconveniently located city becomes one of the most captivating museums of living history I've ever found.

Saratoga Springs, a city of 27,000 in Upstate New York tucked between the Hudson River Valley and the Adirondacks, never had any aspirations other than to be a summer resort. It is, in effect, the young man who grew up wanting to become a tennis pro, and became one.

Horse racing has a long heritage in Saratoga Springs, but it was actually a diversion concocted for summer guests who had already flocked there. The city's popularity dates to the late 18th century, when various wanderers discovered a series of natural springs amid the area's vales. The waters gather minerals on their journey to the surface, and also carbon dioxide, which makes them a little gassy. They were "exceedingly pungent to the taste," General Otho Holland Williams noted in 1784, and "often affect the nose like brisk bottled ale."

More than a recreational beverage, the waters were thought to be medicinal. Thousands visited the springs hoping for cures for afflictions including (according to one 1821 inventory) "Habitual Costiveness," "Depraved appetite," "Calculous and nephritic complaints," "Cutaneous eruptions," "Some species or states of gout," "Some species of dropsy," scrofula, amenorrhea, and dysmenorrhea. The waters were also heralded for their laxative properties. The Revolutionary War officer St. George Tucker, for instance, rejoiced in his journal, "This morning I had one of the most bilious discharges I ever had in my life." One historian has even credited the springs with breaking down early social taboos about discussing private bodily functions.

Some 150 springs were tapped around Saratoga Springs, although most have been lost or dried up. Congress Spring, discovered in 1792, is among the 17 that may still be visited. It has a position of prominence just inside the entrance to Congress Park, a manicured tract of 32 downtown acres studded with Greco-Roman and Victorian structures, which give the park an endearing Mary-Poppins-goes-to-the-Acropolis feel. Today, Congress Spring tumbles out of a lavishly rust-stained fountain under an open-sided Doric temple. I marveled for a moment about the gullibility of the Victorians who bought into such a patently fraudulent commercial enterprise—It's just water!—and then took an empty Poland Spring bottle from my day pack and filled it up.

Oliver Wendell Holmes—the doctor, not his son the jurist—attested that Saratoga water was “exceedingly gentle and uniform in its effects.” Then he went on, much in the manner of a wine critic for a newspaper suffering deep circulation losses, to say,

Its taste is strongly but to me pleasantly saline, with an aftertaste which hints of its invigorating chalybeate element, and an unobtrusive sparkle of carbonic acid gas which is to the boisterous energy of Soda Water as a smile is to loud laughter.

I took a few swigs. I detected some sulfur on the nose, and rusty cast-iron kettle notes dominated the mid-palate. I was slightly disappointed by the lack of vigorous effervescence, but my appetite instantly felt less depraved.

“Bathing and gymnastic exercise are important in the regimen of the health seeker,” noted a 1909 guide to the town. So the next morning I bicycled down to the state park and found my way to the Roosevelt Baths and Spa, a series of imposing brick buildings around a grassy quad, some linked with arcades that allow health seekers to take their walks even in inclement weather. Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt



SARATOGA SPA advertisement from 1937

proposed a spa in 1929 to compete with the grand spas of Europe. The complex is at once charming and disturbing, as if designed by the architectural firm of Thomas Jefferson and Albert Speer.

I entered an echoey lobby and checked in. After several minutes, a no-nonsense woman came and read my name from a clipboard, then led me down a long, dimly lit hallway of the sort familiar from period movies about the chronically unwell.

We went into an austere room furnished with a massage table and a wooden chair. The centerpiece was the bath, set in the corner. It was deep and had a thick, squared-off rim, not unlike the tub in which the stabbing death of the French revolutionary Jean-Paul Marat was captured by the painter Jacques-Louis David.

The tub had been filled with water the color of strong tea. The attendant noted my expression and assured me that this was the natural color and that no one had preceded me here this morning. She said she'd be back to collect me when my 40 minutes were up, and closed the door.

The waters were indeed fizzy, with tiny bubbles that caused a not-unpleasant tickling, provoking a smile rather than loud laughter. After 10 minutes, though, the amusement value dissipated, and I began to get antsy. If I wanted to lounge unclothed in a dim room in a tub of warm club soda, I could just as well have stayed home.

Despite its size and out-of-the-way location, Saratoga Springs has long dabbled on a rouge of sophistication to appeal to urbanites. One night I stopped by 9 Maple Avenue, a dusky jazz bar offering 150 kinds of scotch and 250 variations on the martini. Next door is Mare Ristorante, which has ostrich-leather couches inside and a small courtyard outside, ringed with outsized canopy beds guarded by red velvet ropes; after dinner one can repose, as in a Poussin painting, while listening to a local band. I also passed something called a “brow bar.”

The city is architecturally intriguing, with brick buildings and grand Italianate homes capped with thick cornices. The effect is not quite as consistent or convincingly Victorian as Disney World's Saratoga Springs Resort & Spa in Orlando, but it comes pretty close. As befits a resort, Saratoga Springs was laid out with people watching in mind. Its downtown was built around Broadway, an uncommonly wide street flanked with uncommonly wide sidewalks dotted with café tables and promenaders. I found a seat under a large umbrella at one café and settled in with a bottle of Saratoga Spring Water to watch the pageant.

“All the world is here,” the former New York City mayor and celebrated diarist Philip Hone wrote in 1839:

politicians and dandies; cabinet ministers and ministers of the gospel; officeholders and office seekers; humbuggers and humbugged; fortune hunters and hunters of woodcock; anxious mothers and lovely daughters.

I passed the better part of the afternoon and evening sitting there drinking the local waters, devising new betting systems to test the following morning, and striving—without much success—to distinguish between the humbuggers and the humbugged.

It's the kind of living history I could get used to. ▀

Wayne Curtis is a frequent contributor to *The Atlantic*.

FOOD

What to look for when buying knives

Never a Dull Moment

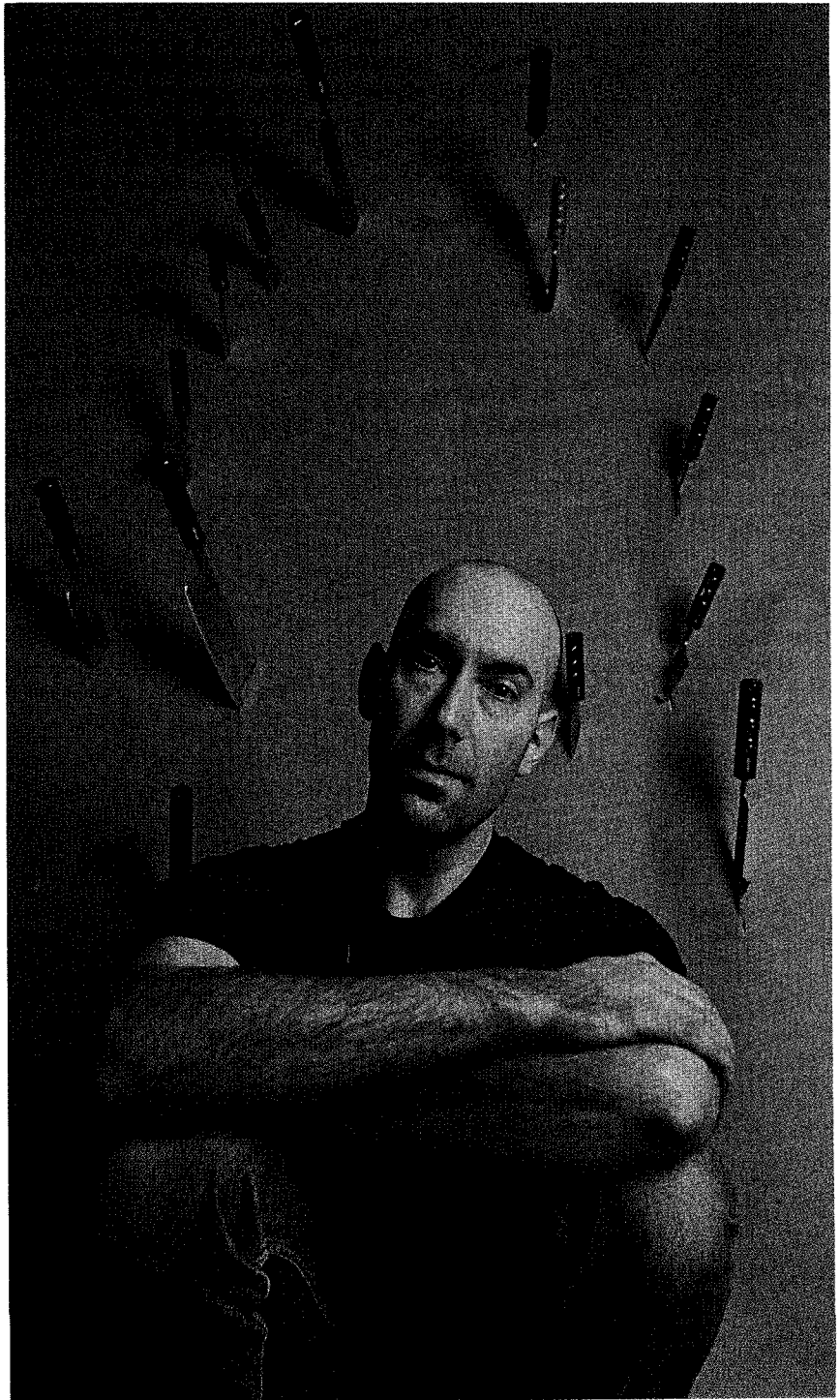
BY CORBY KUMMER

Like most people, I have a random collection of knives, bought at moments of culinary ambition and at good sales. Also like most people, I use only a very few of them with any regularity—and my preferences are unrelated to what they cost or to promises that some ultra-new metal will change my life. Recently a very cool-looking set of knives designed by a local metalsmith made me cast a critical eye on my odd knife collection.

A cook's relationship to a knife, after all, is very personal: You want the knife to respond to your abilities even as its shape and sharpness make you respond to its own. Adam Simha understands this relationship. He grew up immersed in science and design—his father was director of planning at MIT, where Adam majored in physics—and he worked in Boston and Cambridge kitchens as a chef and a baker. A metalworking class he took on a whim drew him so deeply to metal that he decided to turn what was becoming a full-time hobby into his work. The company he founded, MKS Design, started by making furniture; I first encountered Simha's low tables and high, heavy, comfortable enameled stools at the Cambridge ice-cream store Toscanini's, a nexus for cooks and intellectuals (Simha made ice cream there before and after graduating from MIT, and calls the shop's owner, Gus Rancatore, "the root of my entire career").

Knives were potentially more profitable than furniture, and more challenging, if less spectacular. Tools people use every day, Simha believed, should be "compelling, beautiful, their favorite."

ADAM SIMHA, founder of MKS Design,
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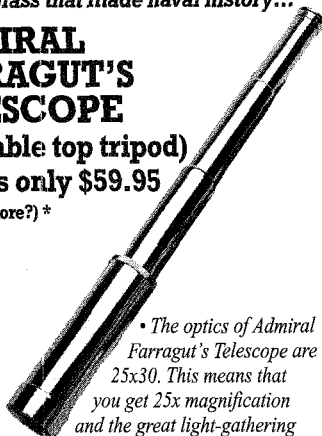
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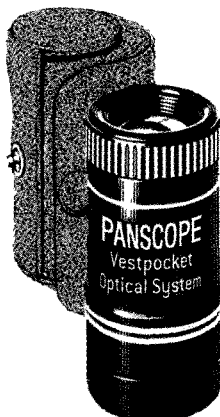
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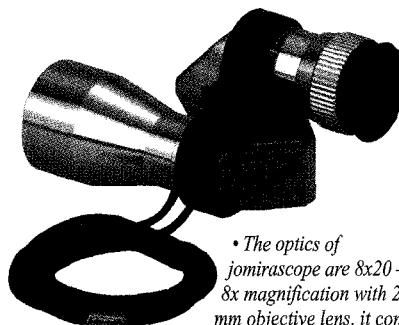
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He made himself a prototype chef's knife with a long blade and a big round handle. In his North Cambridge workshop, outfitted with a lathe and a stamp and workbenches covered with handleless blades, he told me that even after two or three years of use, that prototype "still makes me smile."

Simha hit on an idea that made chefs, store owners, and design editors smile too: using bicycle grips, with their deep grooves for the fingers, as knife handles. Tightly fitted over gleaming steel tubes, the candy-red, -green, and -blue plastic grips caused the young son of David Marks, a retailer who bought Simha's line for his Stoddard's Cutlery, to ask if they lit up.

The cheerful, striking handles get Simha through the door, but it is his craftsmanship that persuades knife sellers to carry the knives and chefs to use them (and justifies the price: MKS knives retail for \$150–\$225). The blade, thicker than those of many other knives, is made of high-performance steel, as any new and expensive knife must be. Simha experiments with styles and patterns in his workshop and sends model blades to a steel producer in Sheffield, England, long a world knife capital. Once or twice a year he goes to Sheffield to "get together around the forge" and hammer out production details. When the finished blades arrive at his workshop, he welds on handles, the position varying with the style of knife. Then he inspects the grinding of the edge—perhaps the most important step in making a high-quality knife. For many of his blades he chooses a Japanese-style single-bevel edge, flat on one side. This edge affords precise cuts and is easy to sharpen.

After listening to Simha describe his design process and working with the set of knives he lent me, plus some other new models—I did need, after all, to experiment with a few Japanese heart-throbs—I understood much more about how and why I use the knives I like. This experience led me to formulate some buying advice for any cook longing to be at one with a knife.

Never buy a set. Few people use more than three knives, and it's practically inconceivable that one manufacturer will make the three likeliest to please you (or will sell them as a set).

Don't underestimate the handle. In holding and trying each of my knives, however rotten-looking and dull the blade, I found the feel of the handle to be the most important factor in how often I use it. It should be like shaking hands with an old friend, according to the *Los Angeles Times* food columnist Russ Parsons. I like the warmth of wood and plastic (knives made by Global, the first

a pain to keep clean. Stainless steel with a lower carbon content, like what Simha and others use, is both soft enough to sharpen and hard enough to retain a good edge for a few months. (Ceramic blades, which come in surprising colors and seem dangerously brittle, are much tougher than they look and can keep their edge for several years; but they offer no heft at all.)

Many of the old rules about knives have been made obsolete by technology. For example, you can ignore the dictate that the tang, as the continuation of the blade into the handle is called, should

I like a knife that lets me hold my hand farther from the food, the better to use the weight of my arm for leverage when cutting.

Japanese brand to attract attention here, have unpleasantly cold, narrow metal handles), and flat sides, which orient my hand, rather than rounded ones.

After the handle, think about the blade—the overestimated heart of knife mystique. If the blades you use most often are thin, you'll be drawn to Japanese knives, known for very thin and sharp blades. I have long prized a short, super-sharp knife, shaped like a snub-nosed mini-cleaver, that a friend brought me back from Japan (and probably paid a fortune for). The carbon-steel blade rusts constantly and is so thin that its edge has chipped through use. But I still love the inch-high blade and try to save it for special occasions.

Knives by German makers such as Wüsthof and Henckels, two close rivals (the sellers I spoke with prefer the craftsmanship and performance of Wüsthof), have far sturdier, stainless steel blades, whose heft helps you cut through dense foods. Carbon steel—familiar in Sabatier knives (a region, not a brand) and old-fashioned French knives—is very easy to sharpen, because it's soft; but it blackens and rusts and is

run clear to the end; manufacturers can simply weld the blade to a handle that looks as if it has three rivets. In fact, Simha prefers to vary the length of the tang, depending on the balance he wants.

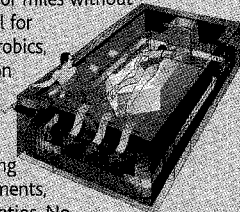
Many of the newer rules are worth ignoring, too. In the '90s, when Japanese knives became popular, Damascus steel—folded and pounded as many as 32 times to make it flexible and strong, and said to be of samurai-sword quality—was the only kind to have. But plain-surface steel can be just as flexible and strong, and the pretty moiré pattern that folding produces can be mechanically applied. Forged knives, with a thickness that increases at the handle end of the blade, were always recommended over cheaper, stamped knives, whose blades were cut like cookies, out of a sheet of steel. But sellers told me that the finishing of the blade matters much more, and that stamped knives should by no means be dismissed. Inexpensive knives can be surprisingly good. Victorinox knives, for instance, which are stamped, are ground and honed better than many forged knives.

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COOL CUTS

Three must-own knives—and a really desirable optional one



Victorinox 3.25-inch paring knife (about \$5). Thin, flexible, cheap, and because it is so easily replaced, OK to put in the dishwasher—though other knives are not, because abrasive detergents and rapid cycles of hot and cold water dull the blade. (Also, it's best to store knives on a magnetic rack, where the blades don't bump into anything else and are in rust-resisting open air.)



Wüsthof Gourmet 7-inch offset serrated knife (\$60 but easy to find on the Web for about \$45). Designed for slicing meats and bread, though I use it for everything: The serrated blade cuts firmly and cleanly, and the offset handle gives leverage far beyond the knife's heft.



MAC 8.5-inch chef's knife (\$130). Perfect balance and weight for my hand and arm, with a nice rectangular handle. Its straight-edged thin blade slices wonderfully without seeming frighteningly fast.



MKS 3-inch "deep paring" (drop-point) knife (\$150 from www.mksdesign.com). The spatula-shaped blade makes this good both for paring and as a miniature chef's knife, and the bicycle-grip handle is irresistibly cool.

The fashionable knife of the past few years is the Japanese style called *santoku*, the closest analogue to an all-purpose chef's knife—which can slice and chop and has sufficient heft to cut through, say, a duck or a winter squash. Santokus have a high blade and a snub-nosed end, which many people assume is safer than a sharp point (and which can prevent you from trying to pry open a can or bottle or pierce a coconut—tasks that can bend or snap a knife). Many santokus feature what are generically known as "Granton grooves," rounded indentations that run the length near the edge and have a certain high-tech flair but serve little purpose beyond what the Granton knife company, of Sheffield, designed them for: to keep long, thin, flexible carving knives gliding through turkey, pork, and other cooked meats. Santoku blades are also usually a bit shorter than eight inches, the ideal length for a chef's knife. Yet partly because the TV tsunami Rachael Ray is crazy about them, most manufacturers now produce santokus. Many cooks, including me, don't find them as useful as the chef's knife they supposedly replace, because the blade usually isn't long enough or substantial enough to go through an acorn squash—the test that every chef's knife should pass, according to Owen Mack, of the Boston store Kitchen Arts.

On many Japanese knives, and many of Simha's, the handle lacks the wide collar, or "bolster," typically found on German knives. But I like a knife that lets me hold my hand farther from the food, the better to use the weight of my arm for leverage when cutting. I also like a high blade, because it keeps my knuckles from hitting the cutting board.

The Simha knife I was immediately drawn to turned out to be my favorite. It has that neat-looking handle but with a slightly smaller diameter (which I find more comfortable) than on the larger models, and with finger grips at just the right distance from the blade edge. The blade is ovoid, like a sandwich spreader, with a rounded edge (the "belly"). Knives of this shape, I learned,

are generically called drop-point skinners and are used in hunting for both skinning and evisceration. (If that sounds gory, check out online knife-enthusiast "fantasy knife" forums.)

The three knives I find essential are a flexible but strong paring knife, which can cost just a few dollars, or Simha's drop-point as an alternative (which I decided I must have, though it costs \$150); an eight-inch chef's knife; and a serrated knife. Serrated knives of practically any length are usually my favorites, because they so seldom need sharpening and they immediately grip slippery food. For years I've used an offset seven-inch serrated knife (the handle is set higher than the blade) as my chef's knife. So I had high hopes for a six-inch serrated knife from Shun, one of the most widely available Japanese brands (the blade has that pretty moiré pattern, though I was told it is applied). But it cut with nothing like the precision or firmness I was after. And I disliked the rounded, D-profile handle, which is touted to be surer in the hand: I found it wimpy and too thin, and the asymmetrical handle offered no better a grip.

I admired the blade of a Japanese Brieto knife, the brand David Marks favors, but was suspicious of its Granton-like grooves and found the belly too curved (another style that has come into fashion) to produce the fast, clean slices I like.

Then I fell in love. Just right was an eight-and-a-half-inch chef's knife from MAC, a Japanese brand recommended by stellar American chefs including Thomas Keller and Charlie Trotter. The handle, which was rectangular (rather than round, as on most German knives), felt perfect. The straight-edged thin blade, with no silly grooves, sliced so fast that I felt I was following its own confident strokes. The MAC fell between that expensive but brittle sushi knife my friend brought me and my favorite sturdy German knives. This was my Goldilocks knife. Try a few (see "Cool Cuts," left), and you're bound to find your own. ▀

Corby Kummer is an *Atlantic* senior editor.

CULTURE AND COMMERCE

Once upon a time, lofts were cheap spaces for struggling artists.
Today they are phony and pricey, and that's just fine.

Lofty Ambitions

BY VIRGINIA POSTREL

When Harvey and Sandy Gordon decided to move from their mid-century modern house in a suburban Houston neighborhood to a high-rise condominium in the city's museum district, they told their real-estate agent not to show them any loft units. Over the past few years, Houston has become one of the country's centers for built-from-scratch lofts, selling big windows, an in-town location, and a creative aura. But the Gordons weren't interested.

"We were from New York originally," explains Sandy, "and in New York, a loft was an authentic happenstance. They were warehouses that got converted, and I could understand that. But just to build a loft new seemed to me a little bizarre." Her husband, a retired urologist, agrees: "What could be sillier than building a loft building de novo?"

After rejecting conventional condos as cramped and claustrophobic, however, the Gordons finally agreed to look at one of those ridiculous new "soft lofts"—a unit in a "first-generation new-build loft-style apartment development" that opened in 2000. Experience quickly trumped abstract objections. "The rooms were huge, there was light and glass all over, and there were 12-foot ceilings, even with the stupid pipes up above," recalls Sandy. "There was a wonderful feeling of airiness and openness ... I fell in love with it immediately."

They paid a little less than \$450,000—more than they had originally budgeted—for the 2,380-square-foot condo and moved in last June. "I don't think it's silly anymore, because clearly it was a marketable idea, and people like it," says Harvey. Then he qualifies his change of heart: "It's silly—but it's a [design] convention, and lots of conventions are silly."



THE GLASS MENAGERIE: the appeal of the contemporary loft

Lofts were never supposed to be homes. They were vacant old factories and warehouses, taken over by artists looking for cheap space and good light. In the 1960s, loft pioneers in New York violated zoning laws and managed without heat or interior walls, creating functional arrangements in strange spaces; a loft might be 25 feet wide and 200 feet long. The original lofts represented an ingenious, economical compromise, not a new architectural ideal. Yet, quite by accident, those loft-dwelling artists invented a new form of vernacular architecture. Their lofts demonstrated the possibilities of a big open space more suited to a certain kind of modern urban life than the rigid divisions of a traditional home. The trend spread to other cities, popularized by movies, from *An Unmarried Woman* in 1978 to *Big* a decade later, that portrayed lofts as scenes of

creativity and independence. By the late 1980s, affluent professionals were paying a premium for the wide-open living spaces made fashionable—and habitable—by bohemian types.

"I've known since I was a kid that I wanted to live in a downtown setting, and in a loft, because I saw it in movies," says Andrew Ruiz, the 36-year-old community manager of the Santee Court lofts in downtown Los Angeles, a complex that occupies three old factory buildings and has four more building conversions under way. To moviegoers, lofts looked exciting and fun. And there was the pure aesthetic appeal—the light and space and modern materials. As lifestyles changed, lofts were increasingly well adapted to the way many non-bohemians wanted to live. The childless couples, informal entertaining, and home-based work spaces that used to

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be eccentric are now, if not mainstream, at least fairly common. Today's lofts represent not only the adaptive reuse of old buildings but also the adaptive reuse of the very idea of loft living. The style is less about architecture than about a particular ideal of urban life: informal, open to new experiences, self-created, and "close to the action," as Joel Contreras, a Phoenix real-estate agent and loft enthusiast, puts it. Loft living is the antithesis of suburban domesticity, if only because the open spaces don't easily accommodate family life.

Lofts also offer residents the opportunity—and responsibility—to structure their own space to reflect what's important to them. That may not mean throwing paint around like Alan Bates in *An Unmarried Woman*, but it does allow unusual combinations of home and work: a photography studio on the main floor with a sleeping platform above, for instance, or vice versa. Lighting designer Chad Rothe, who defines a loft as "an open shell where one can design within the four walls to accommodate one's needs," displays large-scale art on the oversized walls of his Scottsdale, Arizona, loft, while professional DJ Mikyl Calovich plans to build a booth and mini-studio in his.

Some loft dwellers devote most of their space to entertaining, with minimal bedroom space or a Murphy bed. Even a "soft loft" like the Gordons', which has full walls around its bedrooms, contains fewer rooms than a traditional home of the same size, demanding more thought about how to use the space. The Gordons have made part of their large bedroom into a study with two desks, their computer, and an Eames chair. "Whereas in the house I would have been sitting and reading in a different room," says Harvey Gordon, "here, I'm sitting and reading in a different part of the same room where I sleep."

But is the Gordons' place really a loft? Or is it just a downtown condo with exposed pipes? Many critics find today's new lofts amusing or dishonest. "We want to be urban, so we're bragging about our fake lofts," wrote Jaimee Rose,

an *Arizona Republic* reporter. Rothe, the Scottsdale-based lighting designer, laments the “non-genuine characteristics” of Phoenix’s built-from-scratch buildings, which lack “the creaking floors and the smell of history.” By some definitions, every new loft is indeed a fake—whether constructed from the ground up, rehabbed as a calculated real-estate development rather than a spontaneous personal reuse of found space, or occupied by investment bankers instead of artists. The NoHo Lofts in an old Adolph’s Meat Tenderizer plant in North Hollywood may have been billed as the San Fernando Valley’s “Only Authentic Lofts,” but their earthquake reinforcements, bathroom walls, and kitchen appliances weren’t installed by squatting artists.

developed in the past—forms we continue to value for their sensory delights. A reproduction’s claim to “authenticity” is an assurance that it contains the aesthetic wisdom evolved through an earlier era’s trials and errors. Loft enthusiasts debate intensely just which features define the authentic form: How important is an old building? Must there be high ceilings? Big windows? What about bedroom walls? A rough industrial space with concrete floors and few interior walls—a common real-estate definition of an “authentic loft”—may seem less authentic than a newly built loft if the old building has small windows and low ceilings while the new loft is bright and spacious. For people like the Gordons, what matters is not the architecture’s provenance but its effect.

What makes a loft authentic isn’t its layout or its history but its ability to give people a true home.

Today’s lofts are mere reproductions of the originals—and nothing offends architecture critics more than inauthenticity. As Ada Louise Huxtable, the influential critic, wrote in her 1997 book, *The Unreal America*:

Authentic is the real thing, and a reproduction, by definition, is not; a copy is still a copy, no matter how skilled or earnest its intentions. To equate a replica with the genuine artifact is the height of sophistry; it cheapens and renders meaningless its true age and provenance. To imply equal value is to deny the act of creation within its own time frame, to cancel out the generative forces of its cultural context. What is missing is the original mind, hand, material, and eye.

By this strict standard, the sole alternative to fake lofts would be no lofts, or at least no new lofts. But truth in advertising shouldn’t require formal stasis or a limited number of antiques. Take the “authentic reproductions” that so trouble Huxtable. They accurately embody forms

Aesthetic authenticity comes not from some preexisting definition of truth but from a match between form and desire. To be fully authentic, a design must serve the emotional, expressive, and practical purposes of its users. Authenticity is thus what “seems right”—a decidedly subjective and changeable criterion, not something that can be deduced from nature. What we find authentic can evolve over time, as new styles develop through appropriation and recombination of old ideas. Today’s new lofts were never intended to re-create the full experience of the originals. Rather, we learn from the old to create the new, adapting elements that remain compelling outside of their original context. What makes a loft authentic isn’t its layout or its history but its ability to give people a true home—a dwelling that reflects their personalities and aspirations, including their dreams of urbanity. ▀

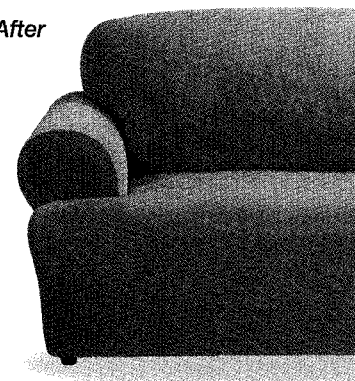
Virginia Postrel is an *Atlantic* contributing editor and the author of *The Substance of Style* (2003) and *The Future and Its Enemies* (1998). Her blog, the *Dynamist*, can be found at www.dynamist.com/weblog.

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TECHNOLOGY

Newly sophisticated "machine translators" let you browse foreign Web sites in real time.

One-Button Translation

BY JAMES FALLOWS

Here is a truth I have finally accepted about foreign languages: Some are just impossibly hard. Before you reply "Duh," in any language, let me explain an underappreciated aspect of the varying difficulties in learning languages, which in turn highlights the importance of some new computerized language tools.

Why are major Asian languages—Chinese, Japanese, Korean—so much harder for English speakers to cope with than, say, Spanish? By the U.S. State Department's classification system, the "Category Four" languages, "super-hard" for English speakers, also include Arabic, but I know firsthand only about the East Asian ones and will use them as examples.

Chinese and Japanese are hard because of their writing systems, which take their own native speakers many years to master. (Not Korean, whose alphabet can be learned in a day.) Japanese is particularly hard because of its grammar, which has many inflections and distinctions that don't exist in English. (For their part, Chinese speakers have trouble with some distinctions made in English. In spoken Chinese, the same word is used for both *he* and *she*. Even very accomplished Chinese speakers of English often mix the words up: "Your son is getting big; how old is she now?") And in general, hard languages are hard because they offer so few shortcuts or entry points. I have never studied Portuguese, but I can guess what *aeroporto* means. The counterpart in Chinese is written 机场 and pronounced *jichang*. In Japanese, 空港 and *kuko*. No one who hasn't studied them would have a clue.



The problem with hard languages, then, is that so much about them must be learned rather than recognized. That is where the latest versions of Internet-based translation tools come in. Two well-known products are Babel Fish, which is now owned by Yahoo, and the translation system offered as part of Google Language Tools. A Web search for the phrase *online translation* will turn up many other sites, like imTranslator.net and Worldlingo.com. Most of the sites are free; they generally are fast; and they all have similar limitations. But the best

ones do something important, indeed revolutionary, to help make hard languages easier.

What the programs can't do is obvious. They are strictly for written rather than spoken language. In practice they're useful to English speakers only for bringing material from another language into English, not for going the other way. (I'm satisfied with a rough-and-ready English version of a Chinese page I've been looking at, but unless I'm desperate, I don't want my words translated into Chinese in a similarly crude

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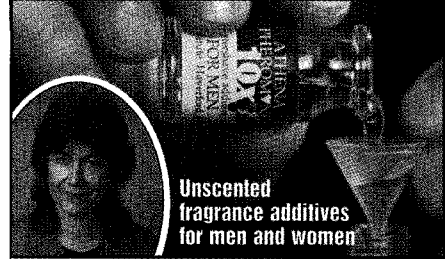
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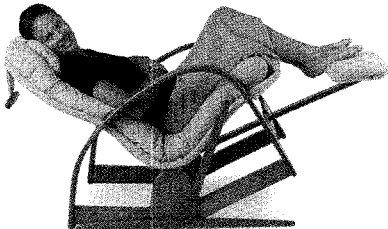
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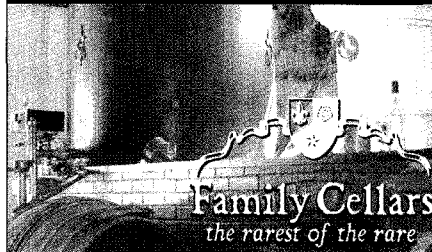
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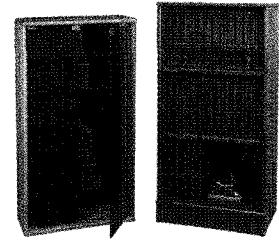
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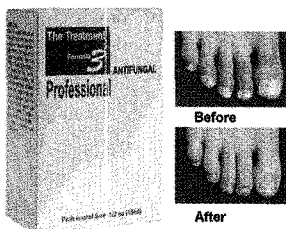
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No gimmicks make learning a foreign language easy. But there are tools to make it less hard. When I'm headed for a taxi or subway in China, I carry a bunch of flash cards, the best tools I've found for learning (and relearning) written characters. The Canon Word Tank V-80, a small handheld device I now carry with me, has a screen on which I sketch in a character I see on a sign or in the paper and then get a translation, plus pronunciation from a digitized voice.

The tool that intrigues me now is Rosetta Stone, the language-learning program sold in booths at airports and advertised in many magazines, including this one. At first its approach struck me as bizarre. The lessons, available for purchase on CD-ROM for around \$200 or online for \$50 a month (I bought the CDs), contain absolutely no explanation of grammar or vocabulary, or any other information in English. They consist instead of a seemingly endless series of four-panel photos, with a native speaker of Mandarin (or whatever) offering a description of what is taking place in one of the photos. "The boy is falling down." "A young woman is driving the blue car." You can choose whether to hear the description, see it in writing, or both. You click on the screen to choose which photo best corresponds to the description.

The whole process, as I was told by Duane Sider, Rosetta Stone's director of learning, "is meant to mimic the immersion process by which we all learn to understand and speak a language as children." You can repeat what you have heard, using your computer's microphone. A "voice print" then appears onscreen, showing how the tone, pitch, and emphasis of what you said matches (or in my case, varies from) the native speaker's. (The company's Web site offers free demo lessons.) My ear for language is poor, and this visual feedback has helped me improve my pronunciation, including the dreaded Chinese tones, more than ordinary teachers could. It's a shrewd use of computerized technology.

form.) As soon as you get tricky with them—having them translate a poem or do a round-trip conversion of a passage from English to Japanese and then back again—they make ridiculous errors. They are no substitute for real human mastery of language, and unless your expectations are realistic, you will find them frustrating rather than helpful.

Realistically, then, what they can do is create the shortcuts and entry points that hard languages normally lack. To return to the *aeroporto* example: Anyone who knows French, Italian, or Spanish could scan newspapers, product labels, ads, or Web pages in Portuguese and know what they're about—not every nuance and detail, and with some big gaps and misunderstandings, but the main idea. Someone who can read Chinese can do something similar in Japan. The ability to tell, at a glance, what information is *about*—this is important, that can be ignored—is a crucial part of operating in any language. If you can do that, you can make progress; if can't, you're lost. At their best, the Babel Fish and Google tools (the two I've tried extensively) give you this scanning ability with material that would otherwise be impenetrable.

Most of the companies offer a stand-alone site where you can enter a passage from another language, like a selection copied from an e-mail or other document, and have it converted into English. For Babel Fish, it is tinyurl.com/qgtov; for Google, tinyurl.com/az86s. From those same addresses, you can also follow simple instructions to install buttons in your browser toolbar, which you can then click for an on-the-fly translation of whatever you are looking at online. With Google's system, if you have a selection marked on a Web page, only that portion will be translated; if you don't, the entire page is processed. After a delay of one to 10 (or more) seconds, depending on how much text is being handled and how fast your connection is, the material reappears in English. Babel Fish automatically registers what language the page is in and converts it to English; each of Google's browser buttons

is dedicated to translations from a specific language, so you need to install a button for each one. With Google, if you run your mouse over any sentence in the English version, the passage in the original language appears in a bubble to the side. This lets you track what the program has done and become a better translator yourself, if you care to. Babel Fish and Google each handle a range of hard and easy languages, though Babel Fish does not work with Arabic.

The programs are best with predictable, structured information, like official biographies or corporate news releases. Google and Babel Fish are nearly perfect with online-commerce sites: I now confidently buy airline tickets, order supplies, and make hotel reservations on sites that are all in Chinese. They often work well with newspaper stories but have trouble with the slangy and allusive language of blogs. These two programs have subtle differences of emphasis and effectiveness. Just now, on the Chinese government's main Web site (www.gov.cn), Google rendered the heading above a list of links as "Emergency Management," and Babel Fish gave it as "anxious management." In some other cases, Babel Fish has worked better. You can install buttons for both in your browser and use them interchangeably.

Over the past five years the U.S. government has financed an enormous effort to improve "machine translation" systems, so as to process more information from non-English sources. The government's National Institute of Standards and Technology has conducted annual evaluations of such systems, many from universities or other research groups. NIST avoids using terms like *contest* and *winner*. But in 2005, Google's system was the highest-ranked in all evaluations involving the two hard languages NIST used in its assessment: Arabic and Chinese. Last year, Google ranked highest in six out of eight tests. (The other free online sites, including Babel Fish, did not participate either time.)

Today's most promising machine-translation systems are fascinating

because they are not designed by people who are necessarily expert in Chinese or Arabic—or, for that matter, in English. Instead they reflect the triumph of brute-force statistical analysis. The system's designers search constantly for documents already translated by skillful human linguists: United Nations documents; scientific papers; commercial books; treaties; European Union material that must be published simultaneously in several languages; multilingual corporate sites. They feed the original and the translation into their system, which amasses an ever-growing record of which sequence of letters and words in one language is most likely to match words in another language. The more data that is fed in, the more precise the correlations become.

"This approach has revolutionized machine translation," I was told by Franz Josef Och, a computer scientist from Germany who heads Google's machine-translation team. "The amount of language-specific knowledge you need in order to create the system is astonishingly small." He said that of the three hard languages Google is concentrating on—Chinese, Russian, and Arabic—the Arabic translating system now produces the most natural-sounding results in English. To see what he means, you can try Google's translated version of the Arabic page aljazeera.net.

I don't think it's too dramatic to say that tools like these can eventually be as important as Web searching. Ever wonder how newspapers in Seoul are playing the latest North Korean threat? Now you can get an idea for yourself. I wondered what the People's Liberation Army journals were saying about a coming showdown with the United States. I quickly identified the articles that looked most interesting and then worked with a real, human translator to understand the subtle parts.

If that doesn't sound like much, you've never operated through the murk of a hard language. Technology doesn't always bring us together, but in this case it helps. ▀

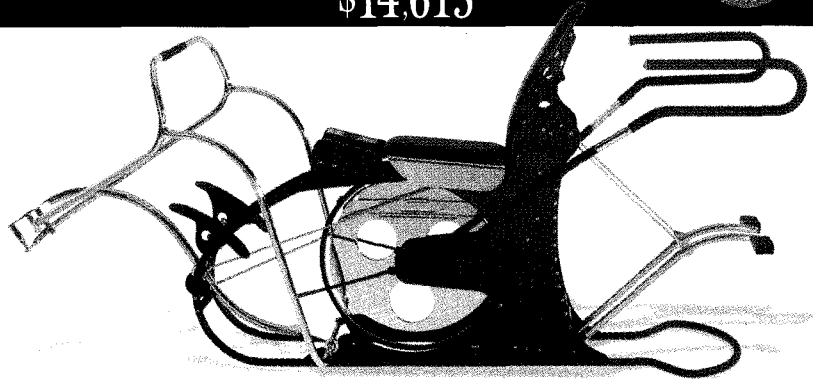
James Fallows is an Atlantic national correspondent.

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CONTENT

Why the social-media revolution will go out with a whimper

The Web 2.0 Bubble

BY MICHAEL HIRSCHORN

My broadband connection went down earlier this year, and I was briefly forced to use a dial-up Internet service provider. I considered which of the icons to click on my desktop: “Free 6 Month AOL Membership,” or “EarthLink,” or “NetZero First Month Free!” I went for the 30-day free trial on EarthLink, and up popped a headline-news crawl. This provoked something of a flashback to 1997, when this innovation—basically, information you’ve requested being automatically delivered to your computer—was called “push technology” and was going to transform the experience of cruising the information superhighway. *Wired* magazine, at the very apex of its hyperbolic frenzy, infamously pronounced: “Push!” “The Web browser ... is about to croak. And good riddance.”

In the Web hype-o-sphere, things matter hugely until, very suddenly, they don’t matter at all. Thanks to the unprecedented growth of MySpace and Facebook, “social media” matters hugely right now, but it is likely only another in a long string of putatively disruptive, massively hyped technologies that prove just one more step in the long march. Like “push,” “social media” is a functional advance pimped out as a revolution. *Web 2.0*, a term used somewhat interchangeably with *social media*, carries the not-so-veiled suggestion that everything else is merely 1.0—that is to say, Cro-Magnon. Really cool people now like to talk about *Web 3.0*. The pedant might note that the Internet, axiomatically, is *all* social media, but for the purposes of this discussion, let’s say that social media includes any digital environment built on the contributions of and interactions among people—or in the case of dogster.com, their dogs. Or hamsters. That would be



hamsterster.com, where you can learn that an Oswego, New York-based hamster named Pistachio, member since January 8, 2005, likes jumping, climbing, and eating broccoli.

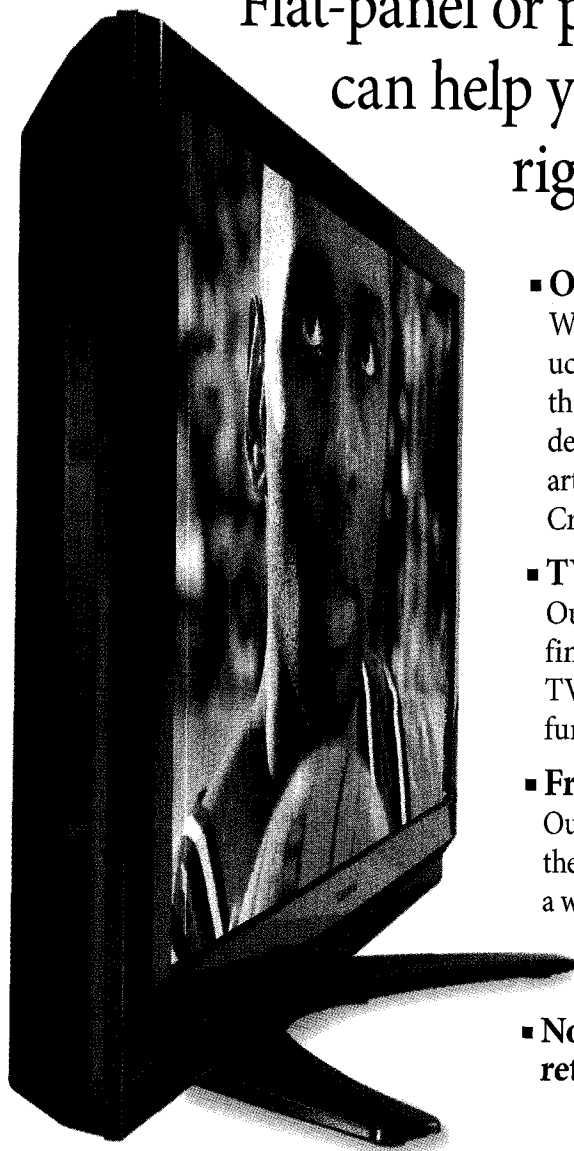
Social media has been around since the dawn of the Web. Remember GeoCities? The key innovation that launched the current vogue was a simple one: networking users and allowing them to interact the way we do in real life—or wish we could in real life. People have been able to blog for years. More recently, they have been able to upload photos, video, music, and so forth. Sites like MySpace connect these users through an ingenious networking system, allowing them to select whom they want as “friends” and creating a virtual experience that enables members to ping through hundreds of profiles in a matter of minutes. You can sort, rank,

drop, and “poke” these friends, just like in high school, only virtually—though MySpace has clearly yenta’d more than its share of real-world hookups. Networked sites like the photo-sharing and -tagging Flickr have exploded onto the scene, boasting growth rates comparable to those in the Web’s early days. As a result, you can see “user pages,” complete with provocative personal snaps, blogs, lists of favorite books, music, movies, whatever, and banks of friend photos, popping up pretty much everywhere you go on the Internet these days.

On VampireFreaks.com, goths can start their own “cult,” or join the “Poetic Death” cult or, barring that, the “Tim Burton” cult. Real-estate agents have the evocatively titled ActiveRain.com, where Merrick, Long Island-based Geri Sonkin, thanks to her enthusiastic participation

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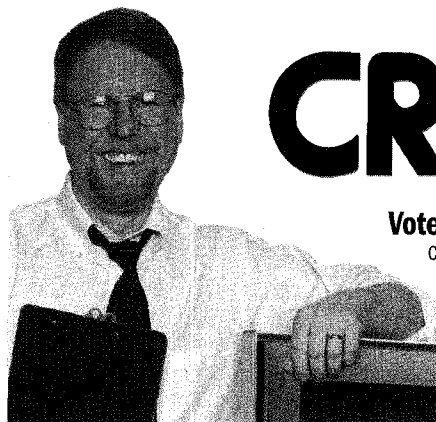
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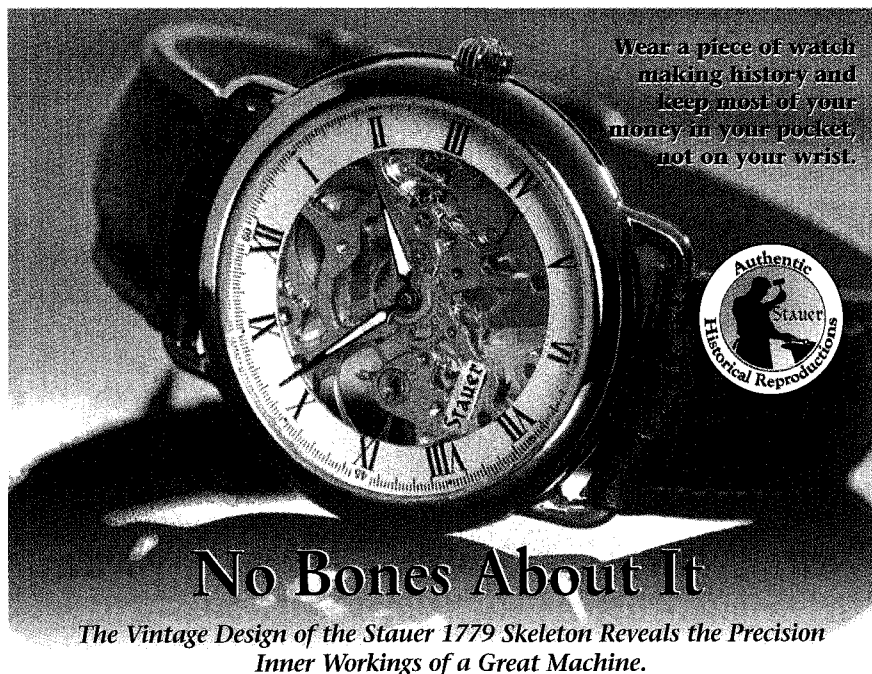
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in the network, has amassed 36,284 points and placed 63rd in the rankings. Snapvine.com prompts teens to socialize using prerecorded phone messages instead of typed comments. "Can I pimp out my voice players?" the FAQ page asks. "Yes!" OMG!

The wave, inevitably, has reached the more hipsterish suburbs of Corporateville. Doc Martens's new social-networking site, Freedm2.com, encourages you to "make art, make fun of art, shock, express yourself, entertain." A semiliterate, dissociative, generationally correct vagueness permeates everything. "Do whatever it is you do," the site urges, "and the people who are already out there doing it, will make the best stuff happen." I counted a few dozen users during my most recent visit.

The USA Network's very expensive-looking ShowUsYourCharacter site is designed to deepen the experience of viewers of the top-ranked cable channel, recently rebranded with the tagline "Characters Welcome." The year-old site, an apparent effort to transmute the brand across the reality divide, allows fans to present themselves as "characters," just like the people they see on TV. When I last looked, the top-ranked woman, a cheery-looking blonde named Captain Lolo from Tulsa, Oklahoma, had 4.45 stars out of 5—thanks to 12 votes. Those 4.45 stars allowed her to narrowly beat out the fourth-place female, a mixed-breed dog from Cornelius, Oregon, named Tagger67, who scored 3.4 stars with 303 votes.

According to VentureOne, a research firm, nearly \$500 million in venture-capital money was pumped into social-media companies in the first nine months of 2006. "There are some similarities between the current 'bubble' and the last one that burst in 2000," Todd Dagres, co-founder of venture-capital firm Spark Capital, told *The Wall Street Journal*. "Lots of incomplete and underexperienced teams, business models based more on eyeballs than cash flow, and a rash of incremental and 'me too' deals." As in the last bubble, sites blossom out of nowhere and quickly fade. The average user of Xanga, the buzzy social-networking site of the early Aughts, spent

15 minutes on the site in December, down from around an hour and a half in October 2002. Friendster, the massively VC-funded social-networking service whose demise is being hurried along by the more free-wheeling MySpace, topped three hours per user last February, only to drop to a quarter hour in December. Right now, the cool kids, especially those who like emo music, are flocking to Buzznet.

Category leaders MySpace and Facebook, meanwhile, continue to thrive. The average Facebook usage is holding at roughly an hour a month, while MySpace is at about twice that—a pretty remarkable achievement, given both its mass and its rapid and ongoing growth. No wonder. MySpace is the kind of sui generis phenomenon that keeps social scientists busy for decades: a virtual expression of “new urbanism” that has allowed millions to make connections where once we bowled alone. Truly, on MySpace, no one knows you’re a dog.

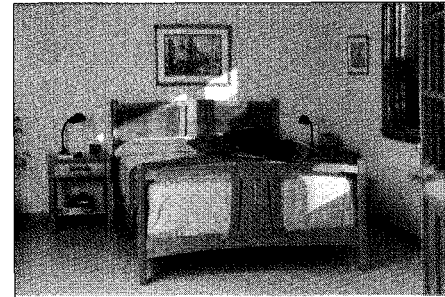
As a fairly regular user of MySpace—an unbeatable tool for tapping into youth culture—I can vouch for both the intoxicating appeal of the experience and the strung-out, crispy, crawling-home-from-a-nightclub comedown that quickly follows. After a brief rush of “friend”-gathering—I know maybe half of them in real life—I now spend most of my time fending off the same type of spam that used to litter my dial-up AOL account, while ignoring endless ads for the True singles service. The random, out-of-the-blue friend request, one can bet, will soon reveal itself to be a proposition for lesbian Web-cam sex or a mortgage refi.

Facebook, on the other hand, maintains the mien of an endless college reunion, in part because that is largely what it is. Famously started by a Harvard student as a way to dynamize the freshman facebook, the site is built to serve preexisting networks of high schools and colleges (though anyone can now join). More chaste and less cluttered than MySpace, it encourages users to consort with people they already know, or have reason (by geographic or affiliate proximity) to know, while making

it harder to schmooze randomly. This gives Facebook a shape and coherence that MySpace lacks, but it also limits the experience for those outside the hot-house environment of school. A recently launched feature that encourages adults to join using their work e-mail accounts seems, from my recent perusal, not to be rocking the cubicles.

Where Facebook has made a virtue of these limits, MySpace has made a virtue of its lack of them. It now is so large—100 million-plus registered accounts—that it has almost come to be a proxy for the Internet itself. This is the problem with the social-media phenomenon. MySpace once enabled a remarkable social renaissance: Because of the site’s indefinable halo effect, you would answer e-mails you would normally never open, meet people you’d never suffer otherwise (“Bill O’Reilly” is one of my MySpace friends). It was, in fact, not unlike freshman year at college. But what’s remarkable soon becomes ordinary. MySpace remains cool—thanks to surprisingly deft stewardship by its new owner, News Corp.—but nothing is cool forever. And once the tantalizing pull of millions of people you could possibly be best friends with wears off, you’re left with some by now pretty ordinary functionality: blogging; instant messaging; photo, video, and audio uploads; networking tools. Thanks to the inexorable process of Web innovation, such stuff goes from “OMG” to “Whatever” in no time flat.

AOL followed a roughly analogous “walled garden” strategy until recently. The strategy died, in part because the limited offerings within the garden could not compete with the near-infinite wilderness beyond the picket fence. The social-media sites are touting their expertly tended, notably fecund, but still fenced-in offerings. And to be fair, they are free, unlike the old subscription-based AOL. But, as with the dial-ups, the distinctions in and among these offerings will become less interesting. Instant messaging, in yet another example of the Web’s buzz-to-blah dynamic, was once a unique and compelling reason to subscribe to AOL, not to mention hyped as



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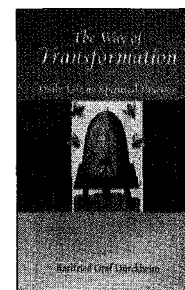
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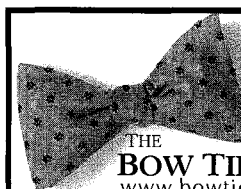
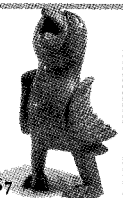
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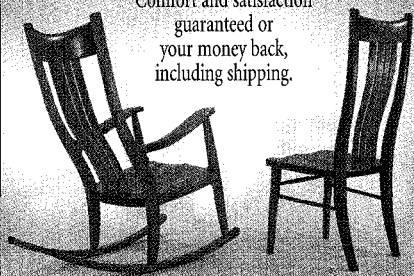
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Few of the social networks have yet proved adept at truly linking people of like-minded interests, and many of the networks being started now, especially by entrepreneurs and corporations looking to grab their slice of 2.0 glory, tend to miss the reason the best sites work: They facilitate behavior that people already engage in. Networks that make intuitive linkages or networks that are built around more-organic associations (like the excellent new Saatchi Gallery social network for artists) may soon draw away users with more-sophisticated social-media palates.

But that's just the start. The features associated with social networks are increasingly being tacked on to existing sites, and new ones are announced

to that most old-media of issues: ownership. MySpace may sell the idea of itself as being without boundaries, but in fact the digital mayhem lives within a tightly controlled environment. MySpace does not let users network meaningfully with people outside its walls, and it does not let them import some functionality that promotes or drives revenue to other corporations; for example, those newly popular "widgets" that contain text or video feeds, or games. MySpace has legitimate security reasons for prohibiting the Flash-based widgets, but the effect is also to eliminate a way for corporate competitors to lure users out of the MySpace environment. And MySpace recently announced it will no longer allow users to post videos that contain copyrighted material—hello, YouTube—much as it was already filtering out some major-label music.

The random, out-of-the-blue friend request on MySpace will soon reveal itself to be a proposition for a mortgage refi.

almost daily. Procter & Gamble has a social network now. So does Barack Obama. And someone will figure out how to network the networks, linking social-media sites and thus allowing iron-man social networkers to commingle their friends, blogs, images, and video feeds all in one place. (MiNGGL, Socialgrapes, and Wink are three new sites already trying to do this.) Individual sites could theoretically block out these epi-networks, but at their peril. Or a new craze could emerge that cannot (for technological reasons) or does not (for corporate reasons) sync with sites like MySpace, forcing users to divide their online selves in ways that become unsatisfying.

Already, the most popular users, like the legendarily pneumatic Tila Tequila—friend to more than 1.5 million MySpacers—are realizing that their future is in guiding people off MySpace to their own, more robust, fully customizable personal pages. Indeed, the third rail of social media may ultimately come down

Most important, users like Tila Tequila do not profit directly from the traffic they generate for the site. Indeed, the value of MySpace and the other 2.0 sites is built on their ability to monetize—through ad sales and marketing, among other streams—the traffic generated by their users. The tacit trade-off is free Web hosting, tools, and distribution. This trade-off is not in itself unfair. But, as with IM, the value proposition does not remain constant. The walled-garden attributes of MySpace and Facebook, like those of the subscriber-era AOL, can quickly become liabilities. And as the value of social-media tools becomes inevitably unsexy and commoditized, it may be only a matter of time before the Tila Tequilas of the world, inspiration for millions of page views, decide they might as well go elsewhere. And, just as in high school, where the cool kids go, the rest of us will follow. ▀

Michael Hirschorn last wrote about the latest wave of innovation in the digital-music world.

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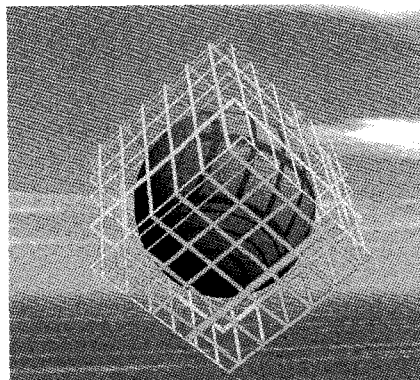
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mathematicians. He is Professor of Mathematics and a Distinguished Teaching Professor at The University of Texas at Austin. Professor Starbird has won several teaching awards, most recently the 2007 Mathematical Association of America Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo National Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics, which is limited to three recipients annually from the 27,000 members of the MAA.

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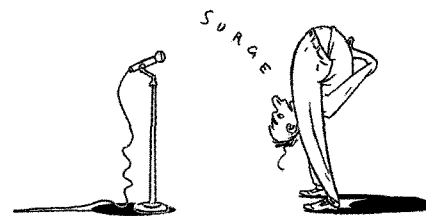
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WORD COURT



BY BARBARA WALLRAFF

WARREN BERGMANN, of Menasha, Wis., writes: “I am a music teacher with an ethical question. A student is having trouble tuning her violin.

‘Can I help you with that, Tiffany?’

‘Yes, Mr. Bergmann. Would you loosen this string for me?’

‘Certainly.’ I start tightening the string. As I do so, I pluck it, and the pitch begins to rise.

‘Mr. Bergmann! I said *unloosen* it!’ The pitch of her voice begins to rise. I continue tightening the string, until it snaps.

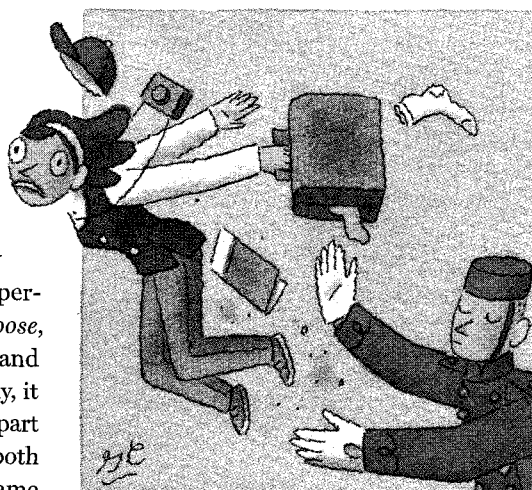
Who pays for the new string?”

Not to mention who will pay for the psychotherapy Tiffany may need if too much of her education consists of object lessons like that one. You were unkind, Mr. Bergmann. Not only that, but *unloosen* is actually a perfectly good, old verb; so is *unloose*, which turns up in Shakespeare and Sheridan and Shelley. Admittedly, it suggests a lack of planning on the part of our language’s inventors that both verbs should mean roughly the same thing as *loosen*; the *un-* is redundant. Also admittedly, *loosen* is more common by far than either of the *un-* forms, and Tiffany would have done better to use it. But still I think you owe her the price of the string.

HOWARD AHMANSON, of Irvine, Calif., writes: “I am having a dispute with my office staff about the correct way to describe the length of a hotel stay. If someone is arriving at a hotel on March 5 and leaving on March 10, they persist in describing the stay as ‘March 5–9, leaving March 10.’ I think

if you’re staying in a place March 5–9, you’re leaving March 9.”

A hotel in Oaxaca, Mexico, once almost threw me out a day early because the management interpreted my reservation according to your system. I forget the exact dates, but for the sake of argument, let’s say I had asked for a room for the nights of March 5–9, intending to leave on the 10th. The request was understood as “In March 5, out March 9.” Thank heaven the place wasn’t fully booked. When your staff tells you about



a hotel stay, may I suggest you think of the dates as referring to the nights in the hotel? Calling it a stay “(on the nights of) March 5–9, leaving March 10,” makes perfect sense, and it will help ensure that no one ends up out on the street.

ANDREW BOCKIS, of Carlisle, Pa., writes: “During a recent game of Scattergories (a board game in which players list words that start with a particular letter), I used the word *IV* under the category for Medicine/Drugs. The other players contested my selection,

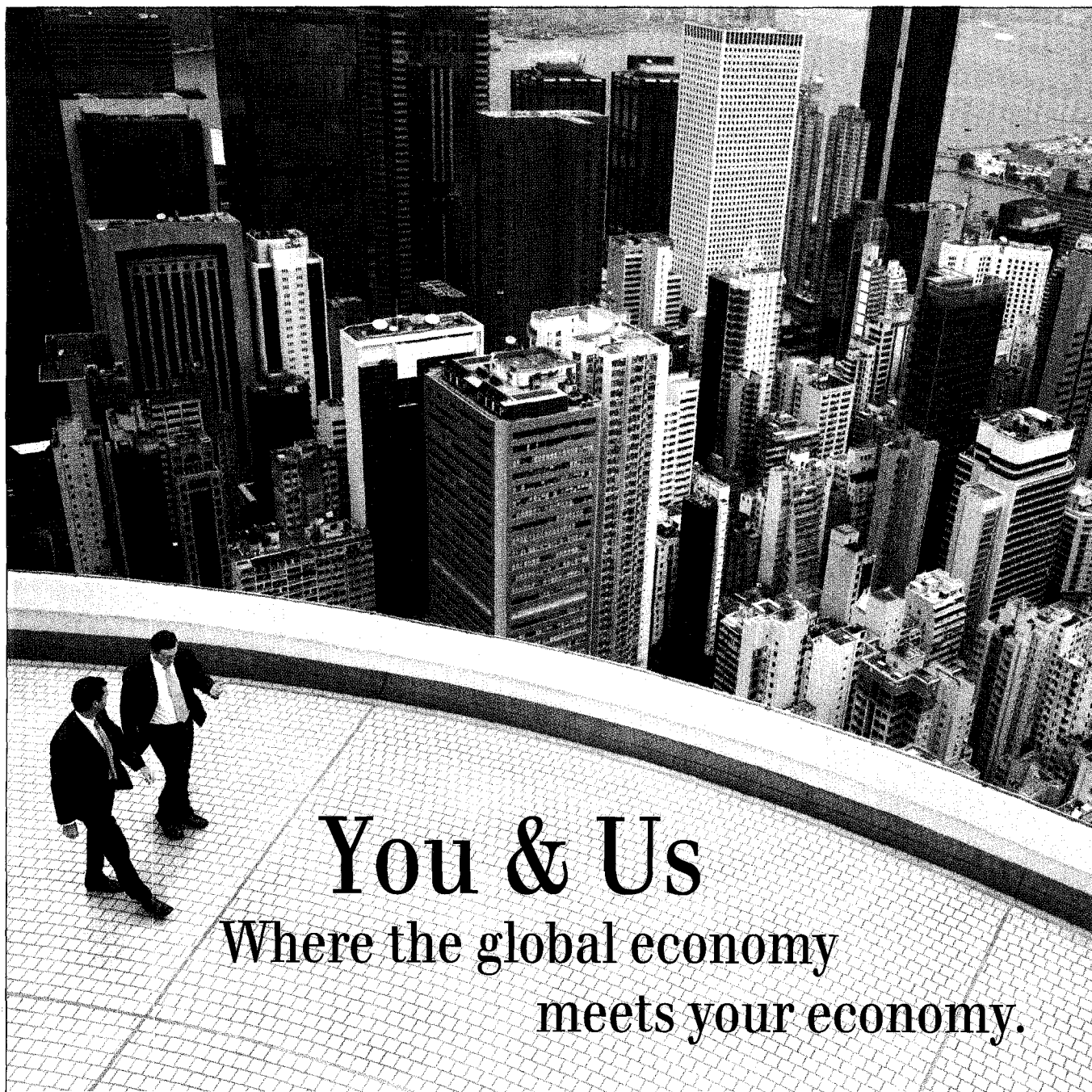
arguing that an *IV* is not a medicine or drug. I stand by my assertion. Can you offer any guidance?”

Close, but no cigar. Contemporary dictionaries all use words like *apparatus* and *procedure* and *drip feed* to define the noun *IV*. *The American Heritage Dictionary* says that the spelled-out word *intravenous* can mean “a drug, nutrient solution, or other substance administered into a vein.” But it also says (plainly, if indirectly) that the abbreviation *IV* doesn’t apply to this use.

JOHN BONITZ, of Silk Hope, N.C., writes: “I am active with a group of people who make biodiesel to run diesel vehicles, and we often advise people about buying used vehicles. We’ve debated the use of the term *late-model*. I understand it to mean a vehicle manufactured recently. My friend insists it refers to older vehicles, and he cites mechanics who agree. What is your judgment?”

In common usage, a *late-model* car is a newish one, though the only contemporary American dictionary that clearly says so is *The New Oxford American*. Dealers who specialize in classic cars, however, sometimes use *late-model* to describe the likes of the Edsel and the DeLorean—cars that are no longer in production and are therefore “deceased,” or *late*. Could they please stop? A term that might equally well mean “new” or “old” is of no use to anyone.

Do you have a language dispute? Write to Word Court in care of The Atlantic Monthly, P.O. Box 67375, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, or send e-mail to msgrammar@theatlantic.com. All letters become the property of Word Court. Ms. Grammar is also on the Web, at www.theatlantic.com/courtrecord.



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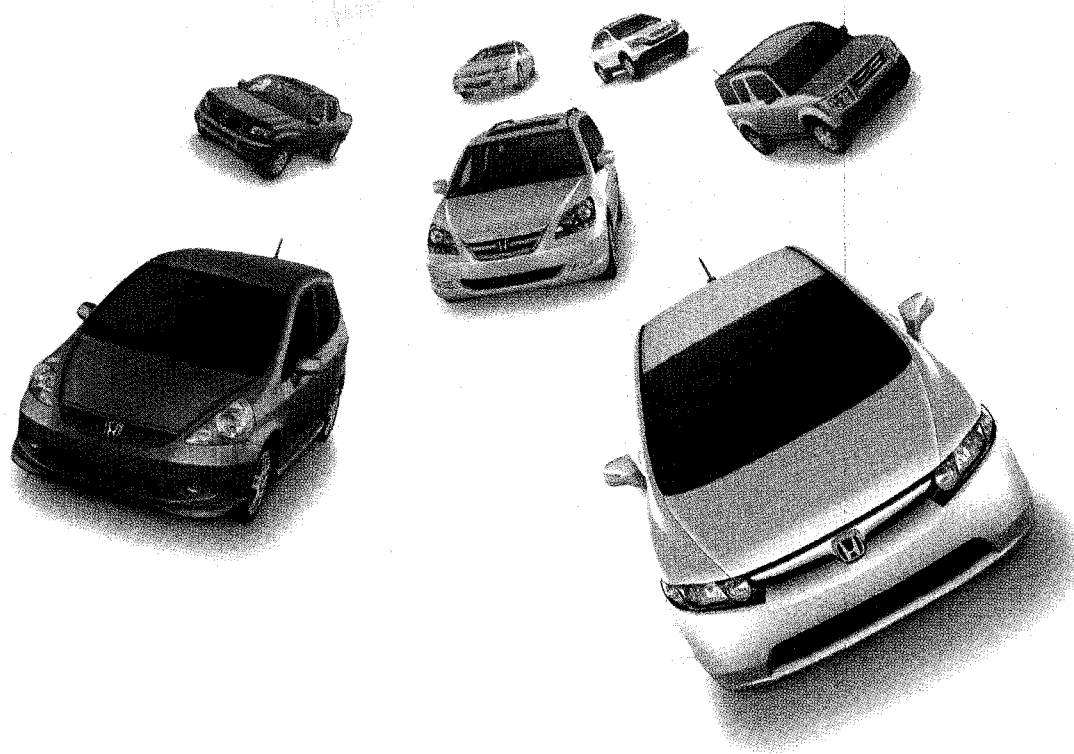
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